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## WELCOME NOTE

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### Dear reader,

We are pleased to introduce you to our inaugural issue of the *International Journal of Armenian Genocide Studies* (IJAGS). This is the first inter-disciplinary, academic peer review journal in English exploring a wide range of topics about the Armenian Genocide. The journal will however not be limited to exploring issues concerning the Armenian Genocide, but aims to explore a broader range of topics in genocide studies.

We at IJAGS recognize and embrace the responsibilities that come with the launch of this academic enterprise. We envision this journal as a significant step towards featuring and disseminating innovative and recent academic research on the Armenian Genocide to a broader audience. We also see this as an important to bring together emerging scholars to a space in which critical and collegial exchanges can take place.

At the threshold of the centennial of the Armenian Genocide the publication of this journal can also be conceived as a long term initiative enabling the next generation of genocide scholars to develop new insights and research approaches in the study of all genocides and their consequences. IJAGS aims to secure a firm place in the global fight against the crime of the genocide and the scourge and grave danger of denial. IJAGS will fight against denial of any genocide. We envision this endeavor as part of the challenge of establishing early warnings and working towards prevention for the sake of global security.

Unfortunately, today we still face the dangers of emerging genocides. There is a sad reality of the possibility of other genocides in the 21st century. This is evident in the violent rhetoric that often accompanies global relations, in the continued injustices suffered by vulnerable populations around the world, in the indifference to these challenges and in the phenomenon of denial. The destructive forces of genocide compel us to collaborate and share resources so that the next generation can more effectively work on prevention of this terrible crime against humanity and civilization.

We welcome our colleagues in the global community of genocide scholars to disseminate new findings and academic research on the pages of the *International Journal of Armenian Genocide Studies*.

Hayk Demoyan  
Director of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute

Dr. Hayk Demoyan is the director of the Armenian Genocide Museum Institute in Yerevan, Armenia, since 2006. He is author of 12 books and 40 academic articles on such topics as the Armenian Genocide, Turkish foreign policy and Turkey's involvement in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict of 1991-1994. He is a lecturer at Yerevan State University. Dr. Demoyan is also the secretary of the State Commission on Coordination of the Events Dedicated to the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. His last book is *"Armenian Genocide: Front Page Coverage in the World Press"* (Yerevan: Armenian Genocide Museum&Institute, 2014), 266 pages

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# PATRIOTISM, COMPETITIVE NATIONALISM AND MINORITY'S SUCCESSES: ARMENIAN SPORTS IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE IN THE PRE-1915 PERIOD<sup>1</sup>

Hayk Demoyan

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## Introduction

Sports, along with other national and social activities, became a special driving force for the definition of ethnic identity, especially in multinational states, and served as an important stimulus in the process of formation of nationalism, international competitions, as well as demonstration of superiority of a group. Nowadays, sports play a crucial and decisive role in politics, already reserving for itself a unique place in international relations. International championships, Olympic Games, and especially football World Cups emphasize a specific identity of a nation state, and are an important factor in securing authority and a special status among the other nations.

At the same time, excluding certain episodes from the history of sports, especially the significant role of other nationalities or the bitterness of a loss, sports are also important in the sense of emphasizing one's own advantage. In the multiethnic societies it plays a unique role, becoming an effective factor of the identity formation and representation. This condition is more evident in the case of the history of development of sports life in Ottoman Turkey. In the case of the Ottoman Empire, sports were treated as a form of self-affirmation and national competition in addition to being a means for a healthy lifestyle.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the growing interest in sports, as well as the formation of Armenian sports clubs proved to be significant amongst the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire. During this time, similar processes began amongst the Armenian population living within the Russian Empire.

In 1908, after the Young Turkish revolution, the short-lived tolerant attitude towards freedom of national minorities and equality of rights was also expressed by awakening a sporty lifestyle. The formation of Greek and Armenian sport clubs and integration of sports into everyday life later on substantially stimulated the formation of similar Turkish clubs and sport unions as well. Thus, in terms of the initiators, sports in the Ottoman Empire were originated and mostly promoted by Greek and Armenian sportsmen and clubs.

Nowadays, Turkish historiography either downplays the crucial role played by national minorities in almost all spheres of the social and economic life. It also concerns the Armenian input in the formation and development of sports in Turkey. The small amount of

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The author would like to express his deep gratitude to Vartan Matossian for reviewing this article, as well as for his valuable comments.



credit attributed to the Armenian community is very incomplete and distorted. The reason for this delicate silence is understandable, as it befits Turkish nationalism and nationalistic historiography, and proves typical to national and memory related politics in Turkey. This denial also encompasses the significant role played by Armenians in Turkish theatre, music, media, book publishing, and several other fields. Turkish historiography finds dangerous any credit given to Armenians for their contributions, and therefore it avoids doing so altogether.

However, in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the birth and development of Armenian sports in the Ottoman Empire clearly evinced a pan-Armenian undertaking within the borders of the empire, which was confirmed by the idea of creating, as well as officially establishing a united structure responsible for Armenian sport life.

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This article is dedicated to a less investigated, but nonetheless very important and intriguing area: the history of the athletic movement and development of sports within the Armenian population in Ottoman Empire viewed in the context of national discourses and competitive nationalisms.

The history of the development of Armenian sport and athletic clubs and unions in the Ottoman Empire begins in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the first training groups were formed and physical training courses were taught in American colleges established on the Ottoman land. The development of sports activities within the empire was first of all the result of modernization processes, which mostly touched the Armenian and Greek populations and were dictated by specific inter-communal demands, notwithstanding ongoing discrimination and violence against Christian subjects.

The first Armenian sports clubs were formed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in Constantinople and Smyrna. This period was marked by the appearance of professionally educated sportsmen, such as Shavarsh Krisian, Vahan Cheraz, Grigor Hakobian, Mkrtich Mkrtichian, and others who had a considerable role in initiating and developing interest towards sports among Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. The participation of two Armenian sportsmen, Vahram Papazian and Mkrtich Mkrian, in the Fifth International Olympic Games, held in Stockholm in 1912, was a special episode from the chronology of empire's sport life.

The publication of *Marmnamarz* (1911-1914), the first sport magazine in the Ottoman Empire, created through the efforts of famous sportsman Shavarsh Krisian, became an additional stimulus for creating interest in sports and athletics among Armenian youth residing both in and out of the empire.

The history of Armenian sports in the Ottoman Empire is yet another example of the leading role of Armenians within the empire. It is noteworthy that their national advancement and their tendency to adopt contemporary values definitely strengthened demonstrations of intolerance by Young Turk authorities. The latter tried to oppose by all means the successes of minorities and, to that effect, launched its own mastermind of creation of exclusively Turkish clubs and unions as a branch of the ruling Committee of Union and Progress party (CUP).

## **The Development of Sports and Athletics in the Ottoman Empire**

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries the development of capitalism and modernization processes opened new perspectives for the progress and social integration of national minorities in the Ottoman Empire. In this respect, an important role should be ascribed to foreign educational institutions in Constantinople and in other cities of the empire.

Under the tyranny of Abdul Hamid II, it was forbidden for Turkish and foreign youth to establish sports institutions or to go in for sports publicly. In such conditions, sports life was active in American and French educational institutions of the empire, where mainly Armenian, Greek and Jewish young men studied. This circumstance played an important role for national minorities to have more active and developed sport organizations, unlike Turks, who carried this work on an individual basis.

In 1908, after the Young Turk Revolution, the question of urgent development of sports and physical training among the Turkish population became an important part of the internal politics of the CUP. It gained significance as a tool to shape “a new type of Turk,” which was to be a healthy generation and, most importantly, to prepare young Turks for military service.

It is known that, shortly after 1908, the leaders of the CUP were consolidating positions of their one-party government, and, at the same time, encouraging demonstrations of Turkish nationalism within the Ottoman society, with special emphasis on intolerance towards national minorities – Armenians, Greeks, etc. An incentive for such political mood was the defeat of the Ottoman Empire during the first Balkan War in 1912. This brought the CUP to the conclusion that the idea of the Ottoman Empire could not save relics of the empire and that it was necessary to create a new type of Turkish society exclusively based on nationalist ideology. The latter became a factor in the evolution of the genocidal character of the CUP politics towards minorities and later on resulted in the large scale genocide carried out against Armenians, Greeks, and Assyrians.

Economic, cultural, and social efforts were all geared to work towards the upbringing of a new nationalistic Turkish generation, and sports and physical training were not out of this goal.

The first exclusively Turkish sport clubs were paramilitary institutions. The members of these organizations were mainly soldiers from military colleges who took part in the Turko-Italian (1911) and Balkan wars (1912-1913). One of these institutions was the “Turk Gücü Cemiyeti,” which was founded in the summer of 1913. Its aim was to develop physical education and various kinds of sports among the Turkish youth. “Turk Gücü Cemiyeti” opened its affiliate offices not only in Constantinople, but in other cities of the empire as well. Their activity was mainly aimed at “improving health, regaining physical strength of Turks and growing active generations, persistent against hard times.”<sup>2</sup>

The history of sports and athletic movement and physical training in the Ottoman Empire is closely connected with Turkish military and Turkish sportsman and CUP member Selim Sırrı Tarcan (1874-1957). Selim Tarcan began his pedagogical activities among the Turkish youth in 1909. Having settled in Sweden, he attended physical training courses in the School of Physical Education of Coaches in Stockholm. As far back as the Hamidian period, he would frequently appear in squares and schools in sportswear, in an

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2. See Hayk Demoyan, *Armenian Sports and Athletics in the Ottoman Empire* (Yerevan: AGMI, 2009), 14 (in Armenian).

attempt to install interest in sports among the Turkish youth. Selim Sırrı Tarcan succeeded in including physical training in the curriculum of Turkish schools, as well as in *madrassah* schedules. At first, he was collaborating with Armenian sportsman and editor Shavarsh Krisian, who named Tarcan as “our partner” in one of the issues of the Armenian periodical *Marmnamarz*.<sup>3</sup> Later, Selim Sırrı Tarcan followed Shavarsh Krisian’s example and began publishing a Turkish sports periodical, which, however, did not last long, because Tarcan’s undertaking found no reception among the Turkish youth and not many people showed interest in sports.

On the threshold of WWI, another paramilitary sport organization, *Osmanlı Güç Dernekleri*, was created through the efforts of Young Turk nationalists Zia Gökalp and Enver pasha, the Minister of War. It pursued the same goals as the aforementioned organization. Enver invited specialists from abroad, particularly from Germany, to carry out activities aimed at an efficient development of sports and athletics among the Turkish youth. Among those invited was von Hoff, who created the Youth Partnership organization in April 1916, with Selim Sırrı Tarcan as vice-president.

There were 706 affiliate offices of Ottoman Turkish paramilitary organizations established, 351 of which were located in cities and the remaining 355 in provinces. It is worth to note that the leaders of the CUP were actively involved in the formation of Turkish sport clubs, helping their activities, as well as sponsoring the participation of Turkish sportsmen in various international and local competitions and championships. In fact, Enver pasha personally assumed the role of promoter, urging the members of these youth organizations to join the Committee of Union and Progress party. He also became the president of the Turkish scout organization, stressing the importance of the scout movement for training future soldiers and officers.

Among the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire, the practice of sports was also regarded as an important means to be prepared for military service in the Turkish army. In 1911, the Christian subjects of the empire were given the right to serve in the army. The first Armenian graduate-officers had already begun their contribution and did not go unnoticed during the Balkan wars (1911-1913). Armenian sports circles were also aware of this approach, according to which the inspiration of training healthy citizens should serve for preparing one for further military service, rather than to be a self-oriented goal. From this standpoint, Shavarsh Krisian, the editor of the first Armenian sport magazine, *Marmnamarz*, wrote:

It is necessary to make sport and simple military trainings compulsory in colleges. During military service, the most disturbing problem for a newly recruited soldier is the disciplinary set-up. Other mechanical movements will easily be caught.

It is necessary to form school battalions (Fr. bataillons scolaires) in colleges and prepare future recruits in this way. They have to respond to the recruit with a smile on their face and indirectly cause an increase in the duration of military service.<sup>4</sup>

Though Turkish and Armenian concepts to shape the new generation were somewhere universal, their main approaches and specific undertakings differed greatly. These differences were in direct opposition with each other in some practical ways. The aforementioned fact

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3. Hayk Demoyan, *Armenian Sports and Athletics in the Ottoman Empire*, 16.

4. *Marmnamarz*, vol. 1, no. 2 (March, 1911).

becomes more evident when observing different episodes from the development of sport life and athletics both in Constantinople and Armenia, as well as an item published in *Marmnamarz*.

## **The Birth of Ottoman Football**

Football appeared in the Ottoman Empire as far back as the late 19th century. The first football match in the empire was played by British residents of Salonika back in 1875. Some sources indicate that the first football matches were held in Smyrna too. Nevertheless, these games were amateurish and occasional. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the first professional football players and teams appeared in the empire. In 1901, the *Istanbul Football League* was created by the efforts of Englishmen James Lafontaine and Horace Armitage. In the following years, Kadikoy, Rumeli, Sunday, and other football leagues were created in the capital of the empire.

The football games in Constantinople were held in the districts of Kadikoy and Moda. As it was forbidden for Muslims to participate in football and similar sport games, the only ones playing at the time were English, Armenians, Greeks and Jews. The first football teams were, as a rule, composed by representatives of different nationalities, including Armenians. Later, ethnically homogeneous football clubs and teams were formed, simultaneously to the development of this sport.

The first Turkish sport clubs, *Beşiktaş* (1903), *Galatasaray* (1905) and *Fenerbahçe* (1907), which appeared in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, could not run to their full potential during the sultan's reign, and became full-fledged organizations only after the Young Turk revolution in 1908. Afterwards, they became known as football clubs. The main rivals of these Turkish clubs were the Armenian and Greek football teams of Constantinople.

The Young Turk authorities also created a number of clubs and stadiums to organize football matches and other sport competitions. The most famous among them was the Union Club-İttihat Spor stadium, where the Armenian Olympic Games were also held from 1911-1914.

## **The Development of Armenian Sports and Athletics in the Ottoman Empire**

Constantinople, the capital of the Ottoman Empire, was the national, cultural, and political metropolis of Ottoman Armenians. National self-governing bodies, various preparatory schools, colleges, and the religious, educational and intellectual potential of Western Armenians were centralized around the Patriarchate. The city also became a center for Armenian sport life.

From the mid of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the importance of athletics and physical education was mentioned within Armenian educational circles. For example, the first publication of the Aramian Educational Society, established in 1840,, named "*Nkaragir Usmants*" (by H. M. Gartashiants, Vienna, 1845) had the following mention: "Various schools received directions and I wish that the Aramian Educational Society was also included in the list of those schools, and the college principals could understand that physical growth should contribute to national spirit."

In late 1853, the Armenian Educational Council recognized the significance of introducing physical education in colleges of Constantinople.<sup>5</sup> From 1886-1887, the importance of introducing courses of athletics in colleges became an issue. The Education Council mentioned: “The Council regrets that, despite all efforts, it could not provide sport facilities for pupils, because of the lack of trainers. Thus, the Council sufficed itself by entertaining them with different games during breaks.”

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the teaching of physical training was also included in the syllabus of the United Armenian Organization (Հայոց միացեալ ընկերութիւն). Along with the aforementioned discussions, there were publications of translated literature on physical training. This was an uncommon social phenomenon for Ottoman Armenians, and several illustrated books that served as guides for physical training were published in Armenian.

The first one worth mentioning is Dr. Schreber’s short book, *Physical Training without Instruments*. V. Sargisian’s translation of this book was published in Constantinople back in 1878. It was followed by the publication of *A Brief Physical Training Manual for Schools* by Vernel. This book, comprised of 228 pages, was translated by Karen Panosian and published in 1879, once again in Constantinople.

The primary sources have contradictory data about the creation of the first Armenian sports organizations within the Ottoman Empire. According to one of them,<sup>6</sup> the first football clubs, *Armenia* and *Vaspurakan*, were formed in 1900 in Smyrna, and the homonymous teams were created at the same time. In 1901, thanks to the efforts of A. Elmasian, more than a hundred people took part in an athletic show held in Smyrna. During the following years, similar athletic shows were frequent.

As a result of growing interest in physical exercises and sports, the first Armenian athletes appeared on the scene. They were mainly students from foreign, particularly American institutions. There were Armenian sportsmen among the pupils of the American Robert College in Constantinople and the French College in Galatasaray. Students from those schools were mainly interested in Olympic sports such as running, swimming, shot put, disc and javelin.

Several Armenian sportsmen graduated from foreign athletic educational institutions in Europe and later returned to Constantinople. This became a strong encouragement for the development of Armenian sport life, especially team sports and football. Among them were Shavarsh Krisian, Krikor Hakobian, Vahan Cheraz and a few others. Shavarsh Krisian and Grigor Hakobian received their athletic education between 1903 and 1907, following courses in the training school of famous French athlete and coach Edmond Desbonnet. Thanks to these three pioneers and their followers, the athletic movement and sport life received a solid support for further development among Armenians, specifically those in Constantinople.

Shavarsh Krisian’s name deserves special mention among Armenian sportsmen. Upon his return to Constantinople in 1909, he set about paving the way for Armenian athletics and sport life, and prompting Armenian youth to take up sports. He initiated the publication of an Armenian sport periodical, with advice from a young intellectual, Hakob Siruni (1890-1973). The periodical, called *Marmnamarz*, followed the principles and approaches of the

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5. Hayk Demoyan, *Armenian Sports and Athletics in the Ottoman Empire*, 22-23.

6. Ibid, 36.



French periodical *La Culture Physique*.

Other important figures among the followers of Shavarsh Krisian were Grigor Hakobian and Grigor Merjanov. They played an important role in bringing up the youth of Constantinople: Hakobian worked in the district of Uskudar and the villages of Boyaci and Ortakoy, while Grigor Merjanov was active in Samatia and Makrikoy, as well as involved in the formation of the training clubs "Vahagn" and "Titan."

Yeznik Kadjuni became the theoretician of the movement and held lectures on the usefulness of physical education.

Vahan Cheraz, an alumnus from *Kedronakan College* of Constantinople, became one of the leaders of the Armenian sport movement in Constantinople. During a trip to England, Vahan Cheraz was fascinated by football and, upon his return to Constantinople, started forming Armenian football teams. The second team was called "Santral" (i. e. Central - referring to Kedronakan College).

The joint efforts of alumni from Robert and Partizak American Colleges brought about the formation of the "Uskudar" football team in 1906. A year later, Mkrtich Mkrian founded the "Raffi" training club, which operated clandestinely. Later on, another organization called "Hayordiner" was formed in Uskudar.

[In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Armenian students in foreign colleges of Constantinople showed deep love and interest towards physical training and sports. This interest encouraged the promotion of the sport movement.

Some important publications were released in Armenian by 1913, thus helping grow interest towards sports and physical training. Examples of those publications are An L. Kiumlien's "*Amenun Marmnamarz*" (Athletics for everyone), translated by Eznik Kadjuni, and a booklet called "*Boy Scout and the Purpose of his Life*," co-authored by Sh. Krisian and H. Hindlian. Other publications such as "Football Book," by Varag Pogharian, "Physical Training," by Arto Galpakchian, and others were released later.

Other foreign institutions, particularly American colleges, had a significant role in the promotion of sports and physical training within Armenian circles beyond Constantinople. Among these institutions were the American colleges of Harput, Aintab, Pardizag and Marsovan.

Armenian sportsmen took part in the international sport competitions organized by Turkish clubs in Constantinople. On April 1-4, 1911 the Turkish "Galatasaray" club organized an international tournament on the occasion of the arrival of a Hungarian sport team to Constantinople. Vahram Papazian, performing in mile run, and Mkrtich Mkrian, alumnus of Robert College competing in discus throw, distinguished them during the competition. Martiros Kuyumcian, who represented the Robert College, became the first winner in hurdling and pole vaulting.

Besides appreciating the Turkish initiative, i. e. the organization of such international competitions, Shavarsh Krisian criticized the flaws in the organization: "To be frank, we warmly welcome the new competition, but it is impossible not to remind our Turkish countrymen that it left the impression of an Oriental ceremony. The result of an inexperienced, not to say careless committee was extreme lack of order."<sup>7</sup>

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7. *Marmnamarz*, vol. I, no. 4 (May 1911).

Vagharshak Varjapetian and Ashot Papazian had no match in bicycle racing, while Vahan Cheraz and Ararat Krisian were remarkable in swimming competitions organised in Constantinople. Another Armenian sportsman, Vahram Shiranian, alumnus of *Hayordiner Union* in Constantinople, did not stay unnoticed during tennis competitions and won the Turkish championship several times. Substantial articles published in *Marmnamarz* bear witness to the success of Armenian sportsmen in international competitions organized in Constantinople.

The activities of Armenian athletic and sport life witnessed the formation of a qualitatively new social field of activity and were a new show of national self-organization that would have a decisive role in providing new features for the formation of new identities and national unity. The birth and rapid development of Armenian sport life in Constantinople encouraged the formation of similar unions and clubs in Armenia and Cilicia. These unions and clubs would later pave the way for the foundation of the Armenian General Athletic Union.

## **The Birth of Armenian Football**

There are various data concerning the origins of the first Armenian football clubs and teams. It is known that as early as 1905-1906 Shavarsh Krisian formed the first Armenian football team, called "Balta Liman." Both Armenian and foreign sportsmen performed in this team, including Grigor and Levon Hakobian, Shavarsh Krisian, Varag Pogharian, Vardges Aghabekian, Mihran Nakashian, G. Gasparian, S. Poghosian, H. Khupeserian and others. "Balta Liman" took part in international competitions held in Constantinople from 1905-1906 and achieved a high score victory over the Turkish "Galatasaray," winning the second place. This is actually the first known evidence about a competition where Armenian and Turkish football teams played together.

At that time, Vahan Cheraz graduated from university in England, returned to Constantinople, and brought a ball and knowledge of football. Having introduced the game rules to his classmates of Kedronakan College and future teammates, he created the "Santral" football team. He also fostered the creation of another football team in Proti Island, which included Gabriel Macharian, Tigran Khoian and others. "Skutar," "Kum Kapu," "Tork" and other clubs were formed later.

The club "Tork," formed by the fusion of "Kum Kapu" and "Santral," united Armenian young men of different districts of Constantinople, particularly from Gum Gapu, who were also engaged in swimming, field games, and hiking.

After the proclamation of the Constitution in 1908, "Araks" was one of the best among Armenian football teams. It played successfully with "Tork" against other foreign teams, and took part in the Armenian Olympic Games. The main players of "Araks" were Onnik Frenkian, Garegin Darbinian, Levon Narlian, Hayk Chololian, Hamazasp Panosian, Poghos Nasipian, Tat and Miji Tatian, Petros Savaian, Marut Marutian and others. Furthermore, "Araks" became the winner of the "Rumeli" international league, held in 1911 in Makrikoy.

Before World War I, football teams were formed in nearly all sport clubs of Constantinople, as well as in many provinces.

Armenian football teams participated in league competitions, as well as international competitions organized by some leagues, mainly created in Constantinople. Judging from

preserved photographs, those football teams had their separate sportswear and signs; the players usually recorded the name of the current team and date on the ball before being photographed.

The development of an athletic movement among the Armenian youth in Constantinople was unprecedented within Ottoman Armenian reality. Other sports were also introduced before the development of football. On the threshold of World War I, about 40 Armenian sport clubs were active, solely in Constantinople.

## **The Birth of Marmnamarz**

New demands emerged, simultaneously to the growing interest towards athletics and sports among the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire and the appearance of professional sportsmen. The birth of the first Armenian sports periodical, *Marmnamarz*, was the result of these requirements. It may be definitely stated that, while foreign missionaries or American colleges active in the Ottoman Empire introduced the athletic movement in Western Armenian reality, the periodical *Marmnamarz*, published in Constantinople by Shavarsh Krisian (1911-1914), carried out its “Armenisation.”

This enterprise was wholeheartedly supported by Hovhannes Hindlian, doctor Garanphilian, Aram Nikoghosian, and Levon Hakobian. Karo Unchian was appointed executive director. The periodical was published with Hakob Siruni's direct participation and support.

Grigor Chololian, a noted sportsman from Constantinople and annalist of Armenian sport history, has fairly stated that *Marmnamarz* “was a publication based on personal undertaking, efforts and sacrifices.”<sup>8</sup> It was the first sport periodical in the empire and a unique phenomenon in the history of Armenian periodical press. It reflected customs and moods of that time, and certainly undertook the important mission of national education and formation, as well as the promotion of its ideological underpinnings.

The first issue of *Marmnamarz* made a call to Armenian youth in the following terms:

One of our aims is to serve as means and support of Armenian youth to get rid of this existent lifelessness, to unite and start opening clubs in every suburb, village and city, to organize competitions, to foster the development of athletics. All these should be carried out, firstly, in order to be prepared for an austere life, which will prove to be a few of their best years, and, secondly, to demonstrate the noble roots of Armenian blood that has furnished powerful troops. Armenians have not participated in international and local competitions until now, and the reason is neither their feebleness nor the different descent; they were unaware of the existence of similar competitions, and thus they were not ready to get involved.<sup>9</sup>

Since its inception, *Marmnamarz* tackled various issues: to promote sport life; to instill interest towards athletics and sports, especially in provincial cities and villages inhabited by Armenians; to keep the public informed about ongoing sport events within and without the Ottoman Empire, as well as to coordinate the activities of Armenian sport clubs and the organization of championships.

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8. *Azduk*, December 17, 1938.

9. *Marmnamarz*, vol. I, no. I (February 1911).



Naturally, *Marmnamarz* provided much space for Armenian and foreign authors who focused on athletics, healthcare, teaching, and development of sports. It is noteworthy that the promotion of sports and athletics was not just an end in itself, but was conditioned by concern about bringing up healthy generations, especially in Armenian schools.

The organization of the Armenian Olympic Games was possible through the mediation of *Marmnamarz*, a fact that proves the considerable role played by the periodical.

In his article "The voice of youth," Armenian sportsman Vahram Papazian, who represented the Ottoman Empire in the Stockholm International Olympic Games in 1912, commended the activity demonstrated by Greek sport organizations and the attention they devoted to athletics, but at the same time reproached the idleness and other useless morals and manners of Armenian youth:

Be sure that if a single Armenian athletic club were opened in Constantinople, shortly thereafter Armenians would achieve a leading role among all similar clubs in the Ottoman Empire."

We already have sportsmen who can compete with the glorious Greek Thorizas and emulate his achievements. Europe did not recognize the Armenian descent, so let it recognize our strength.<sup>10</sup>

*Marmnamarz* also carried out activities directed to the creation of athletic and sport clubs. Moreover, while sport was viewed as an indicator of civil awareness, the creation of sport clubs and especially the development of team sports were considered important to create a newly-shaped national character, a new philosophy for vitality and success, following ideas expressed by Shavarsh Krisian:

The creation and development of sport clubs are very important especially for us, Armenians, since sports will unite us. One of the most criticized aspects of Armenian character is the instinct of individualism. It is always difficult for Armenians to obey others in community life. The spirit of individualism should be diminished by the help of these clubs and love towards community life should be spread among Armenian youth...

In brief, sport clubs are furnaces where not only physical strength, but also organized unity and civic education are forged.<sup>11</sup>

Active correspondence was maintained with *Marmnamarz* from Smyrna, Kutahya, Arabkir, Partizak, Caesarea, and other cities and villages. Sport amateurs and sportsmen from the Armenian communities in Egypt, Bulgaria and even the United States were also actively involved. Dispatching periodical issues to provincial schools and colleges was another important issue; the promotion of periodicals among Armenians outside Constantinople was carried out through donation of issues to locals.

The athletic movement that was gaining full speed brought forth the idea of creation of united sport structures. This idea was also led and backed by Shavarsh Krisian. In particular, the existence of several Armenian football teams in Istanbul and Smyrna inspired the idea of a separate football league, but the invitations sent to the football clubs of Constantinople did not have the expected result.

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10. *Marmnamarz*, vol. 1, no. 2 (March 1911).

11. *Marmnamarz*, vol. 2, no. 18 (September 1912).

The first issues of *Marmnamarz* were published as illustrated journals, while the following issues were introduced as *Daily Newspaper on National Physical Revival*, and later on as *Daily Newspaper on National Physical Education*. In this way, *Marmnamarz* emphasized its real mission and became the most important tool for promoting sports within the Armenian young men of the Ottoman Empire.

In 1911, during the first year of its publication, *Marmnamarz* was published as a monthly journal and had 10 issues. The next year, it became a semi-monthly to fulfill the request of its readers and published 24 issues. The frequent change in the addresses of publishing houses and editorial offices was a hint that the newspaper confronted financial difficulties.

The publication of *Marmnamarz* was a unique phenomenon, as Tigran Khoian, a noted Armenian sportsman and scout leader, remarked in his memoirs: “*Marmnamarz* filled in a considerable gap and appeared just on time to help introduce the importance of physical education and assist those who were resisting the past efforts in this field. It became an advisor and a guide for Armenian youth...”<sup>12</sup>

*Marmnamarz* was published until 1914. Its founder, Shavarsh Krisian, was a victim of the Armenian Genocide. After World War I, Hay Scout, a different periodical substituted *Marmnamarz*. Besides dealing with issues of athletics and sport, Hay Scout was also the official newspaper of the Armenian General Athletic Union.

## **Sport and Athletics in Smyrna**

As it was mentioned above, the first football games were held in Smyrna. Armenian football player Zareh Kuyumjian was among sportsmen and players of the town. Arthur Elmasian, after thorough studies of athletics in France, returned to Smyrna and began work as a coach in the Armenian National College. In 1900 Elmasian managed to purchase sport facilities and other accessories to create a gym in the yard of the Mesropian College. In June 1901 Elmasian organized an annual sports show, involving more than a hundred people. The shows became periodical and they were clandestinely. However, in 1905 Elmasian was denounced and had to leave Smyrna. After Elmasian's departure, his associates continued the work of their coach and formed the Mesropian Union.

During the harsh years of the reign of Sultan Abdul Hamid II, Armenian sportsmen had no opportunity to perform in international competitions and sought to perform in foreign teams. For this reason, most Armenian sportsmen performed in the Greek team “Pelops.” The majority of local Armenian sportsmen were interested in football and the consequence of this interest was the creation of “Football Union,” the first Armenian football team in Smyrna.

Over time Armenian sportsmen created the sport clubs “Qnar,” “Vaspurakan,” and “Sahakian.” The union of these four separate teams marked the creation of the “Armenian Hunters' Club.” The latter had its own regulation, but gave the above-mentioned four organizations a free rein to act independently. Thanks to the zealous efforts of Armenian sportsman Mkrtich Yangian, this newly-formed club reached 600 members, and had about 1000 active members in late 1912. In 1910 the four Armenian teams held matches to choose

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12. See Hayk Demoyan, *Armenian Sports and Athletics in the Ottoman Empire*, 51.

the best Armenian football teams that would compete for the International Cup Tournament of Smyrna.

The football team of the “Armenian Hunters’ Club” achieved great success during 1911-1912. The Armenian team successively competed with the Greek teams “Pelops,” “Apollon,” and “Panionios”, and the English “Burnabad,” and obtained glorious victories. In March 1912 the Armenian team won the Silver Cup of Smyrna. This achievement became a source of inspiration for Armenians, especially in Smyrna. Grigor Chololian noted in reference to the positive effect of the victory:

This honorable victory was a strong moral, rather than material success for the union. It served as an encouragement to create a wholesome movement within the Armenian community. All skeptic and indifferent people supporting the organization felt the expressive spirit of the race.<sup>13</sup>

For obvious reasons, the sport and athletic movement of Smyrna stopped during World War I and gained new momentum afterwards.

## **The Development of Sports and Athletics in Western Armenia and Cilicia**

Constantinople and Smyrna were the main centers of Armenian sport life within the empire. At the same time, the importance of the development of sports and athletics in the Armenian populated provinces of the empire came into agenda. Besides officially introducing physical training in its syllabus, the Educational Board of Constantinople started training sportsmen for provincial cities and villages through the joint efforts of Shavarsh Krisian and Aram Nikoghosian.

Erzerum, with the Armenian Sanasarian College, certainly had a leading role among the athletic movements in the province. As Grigor Chololian attested, this important center of Armenia “became an educational centre for art and literature in the depth of dark Anatolia.” Swimming and skating were put on strong basis in the colleges, which also had sport syllabi. Surviving photographs that captured the demonstrative performances of Sanasarian College students confirm its high level of athletic physical training. Another fact that supports the abovementioned statement is the special mention of athletics in diplomas issued for Sanasarian college graduates.

From this perspective it is noteworthy to mention Shavarsh Krisian’s opinion published in the Armenian newspaper “Harach” of Erzerum:

Athletic exercises will become a blessing for Armenians and will spread from Constantinople to Armenia. We should not spare anything for the propagation of these exercises. On the contrary, the youth sport clubs should be a part of our daily interests and should become our daily bread. The athletic courses should be held continuously for the improvement of the race or, as people would say, for the “national” standpoint. It is necessary to straighten spines through physical exercises in order to have healthy thought and soul.<sup>14</sup>

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13. *Azdak*, March 1, 1939.

14. See *Azdak*, December 29, 1938.

The Armenian Olympic Committee, referring to the idea of making the Armenian Olympic Games as an all-Armenian event and the need to include Armenian sportsmen from other regions of the empire, mentioned the following in its call:

The Olympic subcommittee has always considered only the small part of the Armenian population, yet never the Armenians of Constantinople as a whole. Thus, it should always give preference to regional projects. After considering the existent facilities of Constantinople, the subcommittee has to establish the first gym in Constantinople, train athletic coaches there, and send them to the provinces.<sup>15</sup>

The Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) showed particular zeal to organize sport and athletic clubs in many regions of the Ottoman Empire. After the Young Turk Revolution, ARF clubs were operating both in and out of Constantinople. Some of these clubs were the ARF Sport Club of Adabazar, the “Aramazd” sport union, and the “Atlas” and “Kaytsak” clubs in Nikomedia and Samsun respectively.

Similar sport clubs were also formed in Zeitun, Van, Divrik, and Hachin. Football, shooting, fencing, boxing, and other sports were widely popular in these clubs.

Among the organizations operating in the Ottoman Empire before the Armenian Genocide were the Young Christian Organization in Van, the United Club in Hachin, the Explorer’s Union in Mersin, the Armenian Explorer’s Sport Union in Aintab, and the “Masyats” sport union in Konia. The latter was directed by Mikayel Bartikian. Military and physical trainings were also obligatory in the Jenanian College of Konia. The college periodical wrote the following:

Alongside with moral and cognitive growth, physical training of pupils is under good care. Each pupil should follow the important course of athletics. Besides, each pupil is permitted to use sport facilities during holidays.<sup>16</sup>

“Vahagn”, another Armenian sport club, was established in Van. Yeghishe Qadjuni, one of the founders of the “Torq” club, left for Van to propagate the movement there and shortly after his departure the alumni of colleges in Van organized a sport show, Swedish exercising and a rewarding ceremony. The local “Vaspurakan” football team was also created with the efforts of Qadjuni.

Deep interest towards sport tournaments and athletics was shown in Sebastia (Sivas). The “Partev” club was established here by the initiative of fourteen members in 1911. This club was the leader of the athletic movement among Armenian population of Sebastia and in a due course the number of its members grew. The “Varazdatian” club and the “Artsiv” union also functioned in Sebastia. In late 1911 the first field tournaments were held in the city and the “Zavarian” club was established in the village Kovtun. A football team was created in the town of Niksar, located in the province of Sebastia.

The fast development of athletics in Constantinople had an impact on the athletic movement of Partizak (modern Bahçecik). On June 2, 1911 the first field show and football matches with participation of Armenian sportsmen were held in Partizak. The “Artsiv” sport union was also functioning actively in Partizak, while Mateos Zarifian (better known

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15. *Marmnamarz*, vol. 1, no. 9 (October 1911).

16. *Ikonion, Jenanian College, Konia*, vol. I, no. 7-8, July-August, 1912.

as a prematurely died poet) from the Partizak Senior College achieved a brilliant success in athletics.

Field tournaments and athletic games became widely spread in American and Armenian colleges of the province. Separate alumni clubs of the Anatolia College were created in Marsovan. These clubs merged in 1908 and formed the “Shavarshian” union. Along with football, the union also had a baseball team and a periodical called “Ayg.” Besides the Anatolia College, active work was being carried out in the St. Sahakian College. Annual sport competitions were periodically organized by the “Hayordi” student’s union of that college.

Four college teams of Harpoot, i. e. American “Euphrates” College, French, German colleges and the National Kedronakan College, performed in the first football matches that took place on May 20, 1911. These colleges also housed basketball matches and bicycle races.

The first sport show at the college took place on June 16, 1912 by the initiative of the alumni of National Central College, under the presidency and guidance of archimandrite Artavazd and Coach Hakob Serikian. The coach bestowed “beautiful medals” upon the winners.

According to the information found in *Marmnamarz*, at the same time the trustees of St. Karapet Monastery of Efkere, located in the Caesarea district, “appreciated the useful role of sport and kindly provided sportsmen a beautiful spacious field,” where sport games were held.

The “Artsiv” and “Gayl” sport clubs were formed in Vezir Kyopru and Çenkiler. The “Ariuts” club was established in the Sahak-Mesropian College of Sivri Hissar.

In 1911 an Armenian Youth Union was formed in Yerznka (now Erzincan), followed by the establishment of the “Zhayr” sport club (1912). The latter was aimed at “revealing and developing the physical abilities of club members.” Later on, the sport club “Artsvi” was reorganized in Trebizond and became known as “Sharzhum.” A rare photograph showing sportsmen of the “Artsiv” club, published in the December 1912 issue of *Marmnamarz*, has been preserved.. The fate of the members of the club is unknown.

In one of his articles, Shavarsh Krisian mentioned that:

...Sport clubs, especially, should be formed in Armenian districts. For this purpose it is important to create networks and interconnect districts with distant small, minor cities and villages. For example, a network in Van, Erzerum, Sivas, etc., where all [cities and villages] should be linked to their centers. We should consider local conditions to organize sport games according to these networks, as well as instructions received from centers a few months before the start of Armenian General Olympic Games. The centers should allocated means to send the sportsmen who have achieved the best results in these contests to Constantinople or to the city that has been determined as capital of the current year. Of course, the rest of the amount should be disbursed by the committee.<sup>17</sup>

The excerpt shows that the pioneers of the Armenian athletic movement, besides

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17. *Marmnamarz*, vol. 2, no. 7 (August 1912).

their wishes, had a definite action plan, a visible strategy, and a policy for achieving their goals.

The Armenian athletic and sport movement was also spread to Aleppo and Beirut. In 1914 athletics was introduced to Armenian colleges of Aleppo for the first time through the efforts of coach Karapet Hovakimian, who had arrived from Harpoot. The “*Aghbyur Marmnamarzakan*” athletic club established in the Nersesian College in Aleppo also housed a library and a gymnasium. There were several field exhibitions at the college, organized by the club. In Beirut, Armenian sportsmen mostly represented local American educational institutions.

The “Artsiv” club functioned in Samsoun and had a great impact over the local Armenian population, especially youngsters. In his memoirs, Vahan Minakhorian, a prominent Armenian political figure, refers to the interest that the Armenian youth had towards athletics, as well as to the organised field exhibitions in Samsoun.<sup>18</sup> It is noteworthy that local Turkish authorities also applied to Armenian coaches and asked them to organize similar events within the Turkish population.

Armenian athletic and sport unions and clubs were established in Rodosto, Ordu, Izmit and in the Armenian college of Amasia. The “Vishap” and “Ararat” sport clubs started functioning in Ovacık and Manisa respectively.

Besides Constantinople, the sport life also progressed in Armenian populated Cilicia. Armenian clubs from Iskenderun and Adana participated in field exhibitions periodically organized in this region. Most active were the “Sisvan,” “Hetum,” “Levon” and “Ruben” football teams from the Armenian Central College of Dortyol and a number of pupils from Cilician orphanages, whose number had grown after the terrible Armenian massacres in the spring of 1909. The local Armenian population realized the importance of developing self-defense abilities among the population. Such trends were particularly evident in Chorq-Marzpan, known for its heroic self-defensive struggle during the massacres, and in other neighboring cities. Other coaches were invited from Constantinople to Adana to develop athletic sport life among the local youth. Varag Pogharian and Mateos Zarifian played an important role in the organization of the athletic movement in Cilicia.

The organization of the Cilician Olympic Games deserves a special mention. They were held on April 1914, in a special venue north from Chorq-Marzpan. Sport clubs from Adana and Alexandretta took part in this exceptional event. Thousands of visitors, including about forty Turkish officers, attended the competitions. A football match took place between the “Sisvan” team from Central College and the multiethnic team of Alexandretta. It was followed by running and long jump competitions between teams of Alexandretta, Adana, Chork-Marzpan and the Kelekian orphanage. The alumni of the Central College performed Swedish exercises that made a great impression upon local spectators. The participants were awarded special medals bearing the inscription “Cilician Olympic Games, 1914, Chorq-Marzpan.”<sup>19</sup>

These events promoted the creation of new unions and clubs.

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18. See photos in Hayk Demoyan, *Armenian sports and athletics in the Ottoman Empire*, 83.

19. *Marmnamarz*, vol. 4, no. 2 ( June 1914).



## **Armenian Women and Athletics**

The growing interest towards athletics and sports was mainly noticed among men. Nevertheless, Armenian women did not stay indifferent. It was surely difficult for women to get engaged in athletics within a Muslim society. After the proclamation of the Ottoman Constitution in 1908, Armenian women and girls were allowed to engage in the sports athletic movement. At first, women were not involved in separate competitions, but performed in field shows and in Armenian Olympic Games. They took part in solemn ceremonies, such as the opening of competitions and the awarding ceremony.

*Marmnamarz* and its editor Shavarsh Krisian were instrumental to install interest towards sports among Armenian women in Constantinople. In the articles published by Krisian and others, healthy life was considered as a guarantee for bringing up a healthy generation. For this reason, the inclusion of women in sports life took special importance. Special articles were devoted to the need of introducing athletic courses in women's colleges. In regard to this, Krisian mentioned the following:

If we consider a woman getting a physical education, we should realize that even in boy's colleges athletics is still viewed as a precious activity and this course could not be used more "efficiently" than by turning it into a limited reading lesson. I am sharing my personal experience. Children may have the opportunity to run, jump and cry, but at least in colleges they perform a disgraceful act, because among us a playful and lively child is considered disgraceful and an obeying, calm boy is considered a good child. The first is subject to punishment, while the second shows a sign of good conduct. Nevertheless, this disgrace is somehow forbidden to girls, it is shameful for girls to run and jump like children. Those girls who cannot conceal their natural instincts would be called tomboys...

Schools that took every step to prevent the slowly spreading perversion unconsciously furthered it, and we ascribe this phenomenon to schools that not performed their role.

Every ruthless person would try to take his/her revenge, but we shall hope that Armenian women will not revenge on their children for their mistakes and even wrongs, on generations, shortly, on their nation.<sup>20</sup>

Another article published by *Marmnamarz* was more expressive. The author compared and criticized the customs and morals of Armenian women, as well as the adoption of European customs, while the need to get involved in sports was neglected. Pointing out that the involvement in sports and physical education was a precondition for bringing up a healthy generation, the editor of *Marmnamarz* stated:

Women's liberation movement is taking a meaningless direction among us. Sometimes it is expressed by generous and useless luxury. It tries to come forth during fleeting conversations, expressing through deceptive masks of sophism, argument, and female perception. We are not concerned with this, but with the demand of saving the race. Well, we shall be educated, speak, argue, sing or play, but what should be done to secure the health of Armenian race? The best, strong, and brave offspring depends on our future mothers. Some would like to resemble Western women and would carefully imitate them, but why wouldn't they imitate

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20. *Marmnamarz*, vol. 1, no. 1 (February 1911).

the affection that those women have towards not only the women's movement, but also their health and physical strength?<sup>21</sup>

During the early 1910s the first women sport clubs were established with the efforts of Armenian sportsmen. For example, Shavarsh Krisian formed the "Yesaian Alumni Union" in Constantinople. It was the first women's sports athletic club in Western Armenian society. In 1912 the second sport club for women, called "Izhi" ("Health"), was established in the Scutari district of Constantinople by the initiative of a few women. In 1913 the alumna of Nikoghosian College established the "Yerand" athletic club for women, which soon had more than 60 members. By that time, the "Zavarian" women's union, using Swedish training technique, was formed in Sivri Hissar. In 1913 Armenian sportswomen took part, for the first time, in the Second Armenian Olympic Games.

The teachers of the Yesaian College in Constantinople were trained to introduce physical training among Armenian girls and pupils in provinces. They were sent to Dortyol, Hachin, and other cities inhabited by Armenians as teachers. Athletic courses were also introduced in women's provincial colleges. Although conservative views and lifestyle were dominant within the Armenian population, thanks to *Marmnamarz* the propagation of athletic concepts among Armenian girls and women created serious prerequisites for bringing up a healthy generation. This movement managed to overcome resistance from conservative circles and called to bring a new kind of involvement into the Armenian athletic and sport movement.

The participation of Armenian girls in the scout movement greatly expanded women's inclusion in the athletic movement, especially during the post-war period. Besides the existence of health issues, this active involvement was also dictated by the necessity of national rebirth after the Armenian Genocide.

## **Armenian Olympic Games (1911-1914)**

The 1908 revolution gave new hopes to Ottoman Armenians in terms of security and respect of basic human rights. It was also viewed as a new opening for liberalism in social life and activities in different realms, including the development of sport life.

Shavarsh Krisian and his followers brought forward the idea of organizing Armenian Olympic Games in 1910 with the aim of bringing together Armenian sport clubs and unions for intercommunity competition. Various Armenian sport clubs were much inspired and encouraged by this idea. Vahram Papazian published similar ideas in *Marmnamarz*.

Four all-Armenian Olympic Games were held during 1911-1914 and were resumed in the post-war period after a short interruption. These games were unique in Ottoman Armenian social life.

Participating Armenian sport and athletic clubs and groups which were taking part in those games set a number of records. Winners were awarded with medals, cups, and other prizes.

Grigor Chololian presented the prehistory of the idea to organize the Armenian Olympic Games.

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21. *Marmnamarz*, vol. 1, no. 7 (April 1 1912).



Hardly had “Marmnamarz” been published, when it became a favorite Armenian periodical. It was necessary to start a unique project to inflame this spark of inspiration. One day we were sitting in a restaurant, as usual, when the conversation turned to the Stockholm Olympic Games. Suddenly we came with the idea of creating the Armenian Olympic Games.<sup>22</sup>

A preparatory meeting was held with representatives from Armenian sport clubs and unions of Constantinople, by invitation of the editorial staff of *Marmnamarz*. The organizational committee was composed by Aram Galenter, Gevorg Terjimanian, Yeghishe Qadjuni, Levon Hakobian, Shavarsh Krisian, Martiros Kuyumchian and Hovhannes Savaian.

The first Armenian Olympic Games were held on May 1, 1911 in the stadium of the “Union club” of Constantinople, with nearly all local sport organizations participating: “Aharonian” club from Beşiktaş, “Tork” club from Kum-Kapu, “Asparez”, “Arax” and Armenian Revolutionary Federation’s (ARF) club from Pera, “Joghovurd” circle from Samatia, “People’s Club” from Kadikoy, “Armenian Club” and “Masiats” club, “Kukunian” circle from Topkapu, Armenian Youth Union from Pera, Armenian coeducational union from Şişli, the Armenian alumni of American “Robert” College, “Raffi” union, the editorial staff of *Marmnamarz*, “Artavazd” sport club from Guruçeşme, Progressive Union of Scutari, and Student’s Self-development Union.

Almost 2000 people attended this unprecedented event. Further the games were held on June 3, 1912, June 16, 1913, and in the summer of 1914. The latter did not last long because of the beginning of World War I.

Shavarsh Krisian, referring to the idea of Armenian Olympic Games, mentioned:

Armenian Olympics should stop uniting just sport institutions of Constantinople; this fact will only limit its value. Instead, people should encourage the games and thus make them a well-organized event. Armenian Olympic Games should be an all-Armenian event that would gather all Armenian population of Turkish Armenia. It should become a gathering place of Armenians from Caucasus and from other centers densely inhabited by Armenians. It should resemble the ancient Greek Olympics. For this purpose it is necessary that the provincial population get involved, be trained and organized. When a connection between different unions gathered for a single purpose is established and financial means are available, all athletic and sport clubs will form a single union. This union will necessarily keep in touch with all other similar organizations, located in centers densely inhabited by Armenians. Thus, Armenian Olympics would become an all-Armenian event, the national means for expressing harmonious power, and would thus prove its value.<sup>23</sup>

It was envisaged that sportsmen from Armenian Hunters’ Club of Smyrna would also take part in these games. However, they could not arrive in Constantinople because of the quarantine imposed in the city.

According to the written statement, the following competitions were held: 100 yard dash (for adults and children), quarter-mile run, half-mile run and one-mile run competitions,

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22. *Azduk*, January 3, 1939.

23. *Marmnamarz*, vol. 2, no. 8 (April 1912).

cross-country race, sack racing, and flag racing. Preliminary records were set in shot put and discus throw. The games also included high jump, long jump, pole vault, tug of war, and two-mile bicycle racing.

Competitions were marked by the participation of Sargis Mkrian and Martiros Guyumchian from "Robert College," Vahram Papazian from "Artavazd" club and Varag Pogharian from "Tork" club. Winners and runners-up were awarded golden and silver medals, respectively.

The first Olympic Games, despite organizational gaps, opened a new page within the history of Armenian sport history and athletic movement. Constantinople-based athletic clubs and the ones in provinces were greatly inspired by this event, which was a prerequisite for developing the idea of the Armenian General Athletic Union.

The second Armenian Olympic Games, held on June 3, 1912, were more organized in comparison. These competitions were also organized in the stadium of the "Union club." New records were set during the games, again with participation of most Armenian sport clubs from Constantinople.

The following sports were included: 100 yard dash, half mile run, quarter-mile run, cross-country race, flag racing, standing long jump, pole vault, long jump, high jump, discus and javelin throw, shot put, and two-miles bicycle racing. By suggestion of noted sportsman Grigor Merjanov, various human pyramids were formed.

The third Armenian Olympic Games were held on June 16, 1913 under the patronage of the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople, Zaven Ter-Yeghiaian, and were presided over by famous Armenian musician Komitas. The latter also led the award ceremony during the final part of the games and "*did not forget to kiss the winners' foreheads.*"

Armenian scouts and girl-scouts participated in the third Olympic Games, maintaining order during the competition alongside with acting officers.

The patronage of the Patriarch was criticized in the Ottoman Armenian conservative press. Shavarsh Krisian, however, raised his objection:

The current state of affairs in the world is as follows: when a nation has the sympathies of others, its people will try to discover the past and present state of affairs, general intellectual, moral and physical traits of that nation. Armenians were in a similar condition. Effective physical trainings were the result of the adopted Western values and even the most commendable movements that started within narrow circles could not be noticed and considered national. For this reason we wished to have the presence of the Patriarch and at the same time give national features to the movement that has started. In this case, Europeans could say "this is how Armenians resemble us."<sup>24</sup>

The participation of two Armenian scout groups in the Olympic Games, representing the Hindlian College and the suburb of Scutari, was a novelty. The Armenian spectators were greatly impressed by the proud military march of scouts, accompanied by music.

The third Armenian Olympic Games were enriched with the arrival of representatives from sport clubs of Smyrna, Adabazar, Partizak and Caesarea. The representative from Armenian Hunters' Club of Smyrna, Gevorg Habetian, had an outstanding performance. He won the competitions in 100 meter run and long jump. Sargis Tarigian from Adabazar also had a successful performance.

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24. *Marmnamarz*, vol. 3, no. 6 (June 1913).

The other novelty during these competitions was the introduction of a new metric system of registering the records and scores. This was an officially approved method used during the International Olympic Games. The following sports were included: 100 meter, 400 meter, 800 meter sprints and 1500 meter run, flag racing, standing long jump, high jump, long jump, shot put, javelin throw and 5000 meters bicycle racing.

The fourth and last Armenian Olympic Games were held on June 14, 1914, just a couple of weeks before the beginning of World War I. The games were opened with the flight of doves that reiterated an ancient Armenian custom coming from the Navasard (New Year) games.

The fourth Olympic Games hosted 13 sport clubs and 81 Armenian sportsmen from different cities of the empire. These clubs were mainly from Constantinople: "Armenian sport club," "Hayordi," "Perperian," "Tork," "Arax," "Artavazd," "Nor Dprots," "Vahagn," "Euphrates," "Nor Uzh," "Sasoun" and "Andranik." There were also sportsmen from Smyrna, Adabazar and Marsovan.

The participation of the "Knar" orchestra, accompanied by V. Srvandzants and Barsegh Kanachian, aroused great excitement among the Armenian spectators.

The Armenian Olympic Games had great importance for the further development of Armenian athletic movement and sports, as well as for the creation of a joint body, which would coordinate the movement.

## **Armenian Sportsmen at the 1912 Stockholm International Olympic Games**

Armenian sources, particularly the author of "Marmnamarzin girqy" (The book of sportsman), Alexan Mkrtichian, referred to Habet Papazian as an Armenian gymnast who took part in Olympic Games unofficially held in Athens (1906). Mkrtichian also mentioned that "...Armenians were the first among the Eastern nations to participate in Olympic Games..."<sup>25</sup>

According to Turkish sources, the Ottoman Olympic Association was established on July 20, 1907 and registered by International Olympic Committee in 1911. The first participant representing the Ottoman Empire in the International Olympic Games was Hungarian Aleko Mulash. However, there are no grounds for asserting that his participation in the International Olympic Games of 1908 was the first official record on the participant from the Ottoman Empire.

As a matter of fact, for the first time in the history of Turkish sports two Armenian sportsmen, Vahram Papazian and Mkrtich Mkrian, had a unique chance of representing the Ottoman Empire in International Olympic Games.

Along with the idea of organizing Armenian Olympic Games, the idea of sending Armenian sportsmen to participate in the International Olympic Games was discussed within sport circles and in the pages of *Marmnamarz*. This discussion was derived from the need of "upholding the honor of Armenians."

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25. Hayk Demoyan, *Armenian Sports and Athletics in the Ottoman Empire*, 113.

Turkish athletic clubs also made some attempts to send representatives from Ottoman Turkey to participate in this worldwide Olympic competition. Referring to this question, Turkish sportsman Selim Siiri Tarcan writes:

...we decided to take part in the 1912 International Olympic Games to be held in Stockholm. Through Ikdam and Sabah newspapers I invited young inexperienced people who wanted to take part in various competitions and to obtain a license. At the same time I sent a written request to the Ministry of War and the Ministry of Navy to provide the names of those officers who wanted to participate in international competitions. At that time, the government did not properly estimate the political and social role of these international competitions. As a response to my request, the government did not consider the competitions important from military perspective and thus gave no adequate answer to my request. I did not receive answer from other formed unions, except for the one or two football clubs that were operating in Istanbul...<sup>26</sup>

The question of sending Armenian sportsmen to the 1912 Stockholm Olympic Games was a widely discussed topic in the early 1912 issues of *Marmnamarz*. As the participation in Olympic Games was quite a difficult and costly task, the “Artavazd” sport union organised an all-Armenian fundraising to cover the costs and send Vahram Papazian to Stockholm.

This idea was backed by *Marmnamarz*:

This is a great idea and we think that it is quite unnecessary to attempt to raise the strong sense of civilization during Olympic Games. We think that a desire to take part in Olympic Games means to understand one of the secrets and reasons of the majesty of being a great nation. Resembling to such nations means to have lofty ideals on civility and it is just for this reason that we think that this ideal is promising for the future of Armenian people.

If we admonish our children and brothers to meet with people who are both intellectually and morally superior to them, why don't we all do the same thing with superior and more enlightened nations?

It is secondary for us whether Papazian will take the first or the last place. The important thing is to participate as an Armenian.

Let Papazian take even the last place, but be presented as an Armenian; it is important that the name of Armenia be recalled at the competition, involving participants from great nations. It is true that for about 30 years Europeans have known Armenians as a robbed, killed and ravished, wailed and bloodstained nation. Many people pitied and then forgot us and now it is high time that our name reappears on their tongues.

We want that the civilized world know us through our work and efforts.<sup>27</sup>

Provincial Armenian clubs were involved in fundraising activities too. The “Partev” sports club from Sivas granted an Ottoman half-gold for that purpose. V. Papazian and M. Mkrian arrived in Sweden thanks to these fundraisings and the personal contributions of Ottoman Armenians.

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26. See Şevki M. Çapan, *Türk Sporunda Selim Siiri Tarcan* (Muğla: Ünyay Yayınları, 1999).

27. *Marmnamarz*, vol. 2, no. 2 (January 1912).

While arriving in Stockholm, Armenian sportsmen noticed that the flag of the Ottoman Empire was not flying among the flags of participating countries. They complained to both Olympic organization committee and the embassy of Ottoman Turkey. They both demanded that the flag of the Ottoman Empire be displayed among the flags of other countries or else they would refuse to take part in the competition.

Papazian provided interesting details in his memoirs:

When in the morning I got to Stockholm, I noticed that the streets and important institutions were adorned with flags of all big and small countries participating in Olympic Games, but there was not a single Turkish flag among them.

I was much concerned with this fact. After all, I was officially representing Turkey and this uncomely attitude assumed towards my country was a kind of reproach for me.

I took a car and went straight to the Turkish embassy to express my anger and demand immediate action, with the suitcases in my hand, not even having entered the flat provided to me.

After introducing myself and receiving congratulations on the part of Ambassador, I said: "Bey Effendi, the air of Stockholm is depressing for me and I would like to return to my country... The entire Stockholm is adorned with foreign flags, except the Turkish flags, and this fact is a kind of reproach for me and against my country. I'll stay here only if measures are taken and the flag of my country waves beside all other flags.

The Turkish ambassador was petrified in front of me... Like many others, he couldn't believe that an Armenian might have such strong love and respect for the Turkish country... In that moment, he was probably not realizing one clear fact: Armenians have always loved their Turkish country and it was the Turks, who did not love their exemplary Ottoman Armenian population and were always chasing after them in every opportunity...<sup>28</sup>

Vahram Papazian continued his story: "Two hours later the Turkish flag was actually flying in every corner thanks to a young Armenian, who after a few years was to wail upon the millions of unburied corps of patriotic Armenians ...all of them massacred by Turks."<sup>29</sup>

The Olympic Committee put Ottoman flags in the streets and in the main stadium of Stockholm. Thus, for the first time in the history of the Olympic Games, the flag of the Ottoman Empire was raised thanks to Armenian sportsmen. Further, the Armenian sportsmen found out that, as a reaction to endless violence, committed by Ottoman Turkish government, the Swedish had refused to raise the Turkish flag among others flags of participating countries. It is noteworthy that the representative of Turkish Olympic Committee, Selim Sırrı Tarcan, was not present during the opening ceremony to take part in the procession with Armenian sportsmen, although he was in Stockholm and had agreed to get in touch with the delegation.

2541 sportsmen from 28 countries took part in the Stockholm International Olympic Games. Besides Ottoman Empire, representatives from Egypt, Luxemburg, Portugal, Serbia, and Japan took part in the competitions for the first time.

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28. V. Papazian, *Love, love and love* (Beirut: Sevan, 1962), 53. (in Armenian)

29. Ibid.

Vahram Papazian participated in 1500 meters run competition, displaying the Ottoman state symbol on his shirt. It is interesting that the suggestion of sewing the flag of Ottoman Empire was made to the wife of the Ottoman to Sweden.

Mkrtich Mkrian achieved great results in pentathlon and discus throw and took the fifth place. Vahram Papazian was near the finish and was leading during the 1500 meters run competition. Unfortunately, he fell to the ground several meters before crossing the finishing line and lost the winning place.

The Swedish mass media referred to the participation of Armenians in the Olympic Games. The local "Stadium" newspaper hosted Mkrtich Mkrian in its office and interviewed him:

Mr. Mkrtich Mkrian is one of the few Ottomans participating in the Olympic Games. Mkrian, accompanied by the Secretary of the Ottoman consulate in Stockholm, a sportsman, visited our editorial office yesterday. Mr. Mkrian is 19 years old. He is a student of Robert College and an alumnus of this year. Mkrian is going to participate in decathlon and pentathlon, discus throw with right and left hands, iron and javelin throw. Last year he was a winner in competitions held in Athens. He has also strong skills in wrestling.<sup>30</sup>

Although the two Armenian sportsmen did not obtain any prize, their participation in such an important international competition was widely discussed in Armenian and Turkish circles.

This is how Vahram Papazian commented about his participation in the Stockholm Olympic Games:

In 1912 the International Olympic Games were to be held in Stockholm. Turkey was also invited to participate. Nevertheless, Turks had no sportsmen to send, unlike Armenians. Thus, they decided to send an Armenian sportsman to represent the huge Ottoman Empire and succeeded. For the first time in history, Turkey was taking part in such international competition as a nation, thanks to two Armenians, as it will be seen later.

These two Armenian sportsmen brought honor and were useful to their country. A few years later, a Turkish wrestler dishonored the Turkish people in the same country and was deported from Sweden for having stolen a watch.<sup>31</sup>

During the next years, the question of sending Armenian representatives to Olympic Games was hotly discussed. It was considered not only an important step to promote sports life among Armenians, but also became a matter of national expression of the suppressed group before the international audience.

Thanks to Vahram Papazian and Mkrtich Mkrian, Armenian sportsmen participated for the first time in the modern International Olympic Games, opening a new page in the history of Ottoman, as well as Armenian sports.

An article by Shavarsh Krisian in *Marmnamarz* referred to the participation of the two Armenians:

When Turkey, an empire with ample means, could not send a single sportsman, two Armenians had the honor of representing the Ottoman Empire again. We are glad

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30. Alexan Mkrtichian, *Book of Athlete* (Constantinople: Arev Press, 1926), 50 (in Armenian).

31. V. Papazian, *Love, love and love*, 45.



indeed and we hope that more Armenians will participate in the sixth International Olympic Games to be held in 1916, in Berlin.<sup>32</sup>

Although the participation of two Armenians in the international event was remarkable, no Turkish circle give importance or praised the Armenian community's efforts to represent the Empire in such an important gathering. This showed not only the negative attitude towards non-controlled self-expression of Armenians in the world, but also disclosed an initial negative and nationalistic setting among Turkish political and intellectual circles.

## **Sports and Nationalist Competition**

Along with the promotion and development of sports and athletics, Turkish nationalism was becoming more intense in all the fields of social activity. The purpose of this intensifying nationalism was to fight against national minorities and to oust them from their leading positions in the areas of economy, culture, and education. In other words, the main purpose of the policy adopted by Young Turk leaders was to ensure the domination of Turkish element in the social and economic realm of the Ottoman Empire.

The conflicts during the simultaneous development of Armenian and Turkish sports should be viewed in the context of post-1908 revolution developments, which enabled some sort of temporary liberalism for minorities, while putting the parallel discourse of both communities in development strategies.

The participation of Armenian sportsmen in the Stockholm International Olympic games of summer 1912 was widely discussed both in the Armenian and Ottoman Turkish press, but from different viewpoints, shaping the importance of such participation or non-participation for national identity. In this respect, the efforts by Turkish sportsman and founder of Ottoman Olympic Committee Selim Sürî Tarcan to send a Turkish sportsman to Stockholm failed, and they triggered an interesting evaluation of this fact in his writings. Tarcan viewed sport competition as completion in the military field, where the representatives of participating countries had to demonstrate superiority to their competitors. Tarcan referred to the parade performed by sportsmen from participant nations and to the presence of national flags in the field with evident disappointment:

Each chosen representative of the 26 countries was there, except us. This pain filled my eyes filled with tears. The huge Ottoman Empire that had once given to the Europeans the phrase "as valiant as a Turk" today is not taking part in this strong competition. This is a very painful setback. Naturally, I applied to the government in order to send a few Turkish sportsmen to this important event, since we have been accustomed for years to expect everything implemented by the government. However, I could not share my concern with anybody. The answer from the Ministry of War made me even more grievous. As an answer to my both private and official request, Fuat pasha, the advisor to the Ministry of War, replied: "The issue is not of military importance. Thus, it is not necessary to send policemen to this event." How can one not be despaired by similar answer? Nevertheless, the Olympic Games were firstly important from the military perspective. It is enough to say that there were one general and 6 policemen

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32. *Marmnamarz*, vol. 2, no. 12 (June 1912).

from Germany, 1 commander and 5 policemen from France, 1 general and 30 policemen from Russia, while Italy, Belgium, Denmark, Greece and Serbia have sent more policemen with different titles. For the nations, which think that future war will not differ from sport competition, it is not difficult to understand the real essence of Olympic Games.<sup>33</sup>

Those lines were written just a couple of months before the First Balkan war and the overall rhetoric of the Turkish sportsman is quite understandable. Shavarsh Krisian, the editor of *Marmnamarz*, responded to the abovementioned statement. The article, entitled "Our answer," actually touched the topic of national competitiveness in sports, projecting broader nationalist competition in post-revolution Ottoman Empire. In his reply article, he put:

We've attentively read the above-stated article by Selim Sırrı Bey several times. There's no need to state that we present this article to the readers only for the opinions and viewpoints it contains.

The absence of Turkish policemen during Olympic Games has never upset us. Conversely, we feel offended that Selim Sırrı Bey puts every effort to differ between a Christian Ottoman and Turkish Ottoman, if he ever admits that Christians are Ottomans.

Let's not forget that this article is published in a Turkish newspaper and is addressed to the Turkish public. Therefore, Selim Sırrı Bey shows himself in his true colors before Armenian and particularly Turkish public. This means he doesn't contemplate that his article would be read by non-Turkish public. For this purpose, there is no need to keep bringing about the outdated formulae, which have lost their faded meanings long ago.

Let's cut the long story short. Two Armenians travel to Stockholm by their own means and fundraisings, introduce themselves not as Armenians, but as Ottomans, wear uniforms with the Ottoman Crescent depicted on them, struggle to introduce Ottomanism among different teams and in Europe, and win applauses from the public as Ottoman sportsmen. And, at the end, Selim Sırrı Bey falsifies and distorts the facts by saying he could not find Turks participating in Stockholm Olympic, without ever mentioning two Ottomans who happened to be Armenians.

Isn't this enough to reveal the psychology that unfortunately dominates in the mindset of, as it is considered, the most progressive elements of this country?

Either this country is for Turks only and we Armenians and other nationalities are not citizens of the Empire, because we are not Muslims, or this country is called the Ottoman Empire, where every individual and every nationality have equal responsibility and rights...

Today, when the Ottoman Empire, which is not a country for Turks only, as Selim Sırrı Bey thinks, wages a struggle for existence, Armenians should also take arms and protect their Ottoman country...<sup>34</sup>

The development of sport life and organized competitions contributed to some extent to divergences in the Ottoman urban society and resulted in problems of political importance.

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33. Translated from Ottoman Turkish to Armenian by Shavarsh Krisian, see *Marmnamarz*, vol. 2, no. 18 (September 1912).

34. *Marmnamarz*, vol. 2, no. 20 (October 1912).



The Armenian argument about sport competitiveness also bore nationalistic character. Namely, a victory of Armenian sportsmen over Turkish, Greek, and other clubs was presented as a natural phenomenon, thus prioritizing Armenian sportsmen and the significance of records set by them.

Thus, after the victory of the Armenian Hunters' Club's football team over the local Greek "Pelops" team in Smyrna, the Armenian comment on this success was:

Today we thank Smyrna Armenians and wish that they have supporters wherever they are, and from now on we are sure that Armenian youth, who forms the basis of the Armenian race, will have victories in sports as well, like in anything else. From that time onwards, Armenians will have a different way of life and condition, will receive different treatment from foreigners, and will consequently have another future.<sup>35</sup>

The match between the Armenian "Balta Liman" and the Turkish "Galatasaray" teams held in 1906 is of particular interest. About 3000 Armenians, Europeans, Greeks, and Turkish people attended the match. Armenian football player Stepan Khanjian, who participated in the abovementioned game, recalled that among the guests there were also Turkish high-ranking officers who "were invited by Galatasaray to applaud their victory..." The match finished with an appalling victory of the Armenian team that scored five unanswered goals.

On September 2, 1912 an international tournament organized by the "Fenerbahce" club was held in the "Union" club stadium in Kadikoy, Istanbul. Armenian, Turkish and Greek clubs and sportsmen participated. The tournament was attended by various layers of Turkish population and especially servicemen. Taking advantage from the Bayram holiday, they "hastened to come and encourage the participants. The Turkish guests thought that they would win the match and show the outcome of four-year efforts."

Then *Marmnamarz* added:

All expectations of Turkish sportsmen died off, because in nearly all competitions Armenians preserved their leading positions and performed under the applauses of guests and especially Armenian visitors...

As one can judge from the aforementioned results, Armenians were chief leaders in the competitions. It is true that the records, compared to the ones set during the Olympic Games, were not that good, but clearly showed how much Turks fell behind in sport competitions. They need to train in order to take good positions in competitions organized by them.<sup>36</sup>

Another interesting extract found in the pages of *Marmnamarz* shows the reaction of Turks after Armenian victories. It is even more interesting to view this paragraph in the context of different opinions and even clashing views concerning pan-Ottoman ideology:

When Armenian visitors began applauding their compatriots, Turks grieved and objected, asking why they were discriminating between them, since they were all Ottomans, etc. There were many discussions that made us reflect why Turks exploit

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35. *Marmnamarz*, vol. 2, no. 17 (April 1912).

36. *Marmnamarz*, vol. 2, no. 18 (September 1912).

the advantages of Armenians and consider their traits and rights as Ottoman, but during massacres and riots they have counted us as Armenians and not Ottomans. Therefore, we are asking this question to them.<sup>37</sup>

Some Armenian clubs started to recruit Turkish members in order not to be accused of having only Armenian members and falling under the danger of being closed.

The formation of scout organizations with its semi-militaristic character among Armenian youth brought new impetus in the conflicting discourse, creating harsh and negative counter steps on behalf of the Young Turkey. The semi-military character of scout detachments and scout gatherings and marches of Armenian groups in the Ottoman capital city may have troubled Young Turkish authorities. The parallel creation of similar structures among Turkish youth became strongly connected with the army and started to broaden its network under the aegis of War Minister Enver pasha, who headed Ottoman Turkish scout organizations.

On April 1916, Enver pasha made a special proclamation for youth organizations, where he referred to the situation in the country, as well as to the importance of social education and the realization of national desires. This was evidence that ethnic minorities in the Ottoman Empire were already being considered an alien element and therefore it was intolerable to see them as successful competitors in the field of sport. One of the clear evidences of exclusion of Christian minorities from the social strata of the Ottoman Empire was the solid support provided by the CUP to Turkish sport clubs and scout organizations with an aim to counteract the successes of minorities in the field of sportive competitions.

Young Turks paid special attention to the creation of Turkish sport clubs and in some cases they sponsored such initiatives directly. In late 1913 Celal Bayar, the Executive Secretary of Young Turkish party, visited Smyrna and allocated funds to form Turkish athletic club.

The Turkish "Altay" club was established on June 6, 1914. The fellows of this club were members of the "Union and Progress" party. It was not accidental that Dr. Nazim Bey, who was one of the Young Turkish ultra-nationalistic figures and one of the main perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide, headed the "Fenerbahce" sport club in 1916.

## **The Armenian Sport life and Genocide**

The policy of genocide implemented by the Committee Union and Progress shortly after the First World War broke out resulted in a huge blow on the social, political and cultural life of Ottoman Armenians. Hundreds of Armenian intellectuals, among them also sportsmen, became victims of the genocidal policy. In 1915 nearly all Armenian sport clubs and unions in the Ottoman Empire ceased their existence. One of the victims of the genocide was also the editor-in-chief of "Marmnamarz," Shavarsh Krisian, who was exiled to Ayaş with a group of Istanbul Armenian intellectuals and shortly afterwards killed.

The cruel retaliation against eminent Ottoman Armenian intellectuals committed by the CUP government was conditioned by their violent intolerance to the leading positions of

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37. Ibid.

national minorities. They aimed to create a new Turkish nationalistic ideology based on the leading motto “Turkey for Turks.”

Among the victims of Genocide was Galust Arkhaian, from the Gedig Pasha sub-branch of the “Artavazd” sport club, who was exiled to Deir el Zor and died there. Another Armenian sportsman, Vardevar Yapuchian, also died during the exile to Deir el Zor. Hayk Chololian, a sportsman from Constantinople and a football player in the “Arax” team, joined the Turkish army and served as an assistant to civil engineer in Sivas. He was among 1700 Armenian soldiers and officers killed during the general murder of Armenian servicemen of the Turkish army.

Among the victims of WWI and the Armenian Genocide were Yervand Nshanian and Gevorg Kerestechian, the founders of the “Sasoun” athletic union in Makrikoy, Constantinople; Hovhannes Gorian, one of the best football players of “Robert” College; Ghazaros Guyumchian, alumnus of the “Sanasarian” Armenian college of Erzerum and a coach in the college of Uchpek village, located near Chemeshgezak; Gevorg Terjimanian, one of the organisers of the First Armenian Olympic Games; Poghos Zenneian, representative of the scout movement, and many others. Among the victims of the Armenian Genocide was sportsman Avetis Aychian, member of the “Torq” athletic union in Constantinople. He was in Bitlis working as a teacher in a Turkish college when he was deported and killed.

The majority of Armenian sportsmen who were members of clubs outside Constantinople and Smyrna were deported and killed.

Nothing is known of the fate of the Trabzon based “Artsiv” (Eagle) club of Armenian sportsmen, whose picture was printed in one of the 1912 issues of “Marmnamarz.”

The April 1920 issue of the periodical “Hay Scout” had an inscription on its cover that recalled the great loss: “In memory of martyred and killed sportsmen.”

## **Conclusion**

The establishment and development of Armenian sports, scout clubs and unions in the Ottoman cities and villages inhabited by Armenians heralded a new shift in vital inter-communal relations among Western Armenians. The creation of sport clubs and the introduction of athletics in schools and colleges were regarded as significant means for preserving Armenian identity and promoting the idea of a new generation. The latter was to attain a leading role in the improvement and reorganization of national life.

The creation of the Armenian General Athletic Union was not just a mere idea and was not limited to the context of only athletic issues. It was set to realize and support the idea of uniting Armenians and training a healthy generation out of orphanages.

The animated athletic and sport life in the Ottoman Empire could not remain unnoticed to Ottoman reactionary and nationalist circles; the success of Armenian sportsmen and the development of Armenian sport life were against the officially pursued policy to consider the Turkish nation above everything.

The newly-formed Armenian sport movement incurred serious damages because of the premeditated plan of implementation of Armenian Genocide. During 1914-1915 all Armenian sport clubs were closed, several Armenian sportsmen were exiled and massacred.

However, shortly after WWI the movement showed signs of rebirth. This rebirth marked another bright page in the chronology of Armenian sports and athletic history.

The scout movement served as an additional stimulus to spread the athletic movement, as well as to speak for the demand of bringing up a healthy generation. This policy was especially expressed by athletic initiatives in Armenian orphanages.

After the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in WWI, the collapse of the empire brought a general recession, which also affected the sport field. However, sports and sports competitions would soon become one of the key elements of intensification of Turkish nationalism; after the declaration of the Turkish Republic, the new nationalist authorities attributed great value to sport and physical training, and considered it a significant means for claiming a new ideology and bolstering the supremacy of the Turkish nation.

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Rebecca Jinks recently completed her PhD at the University of London, entitled «Representing Genocide: The Holocaust as Paradigm?». Her thesis used the four best-known genocides of the twentieth century as comparators – Armenia, Cambodia, Bosnia and Rwanda – and looked at these issues through the lens of film, literature, testimony, memorials and museums, and photography. Dr. Jinks is currently Lecturer in Modern European History at the University of East Anglia, and is researching her next book on the social history of interwar humanitarianism.

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# SITUATING TSITSERNAKABERD: THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE MUSEUM IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT<sup>1</sup>

Rebecca Jinks

*This article sets the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, and the Tsitsernakaberd memorial complex, into the global context of genocide memorial museums. It discusses architectural and design features as well as the museum's first permanent exhibition (1995-2013, with updates and additions), and argues that while the museum and memorial complex conform to global trends in many ways, the museum exhibition itself showed some differences. Specifically, it seems that the experience of longstanding genocide denial and the continued international non-recognition of the genocide in the early 1990s means that the exhibition had to take on the 'burden of proof' and, unlike in other museums, was almost wholly devoted to constructing a 'case for genocide'*

A decade into the twenty-first century, the global 'memory boom' shows no sign of slowing down – especially regarding 'difficult pasts': every year, more books are written, films made, and commemorative ceremonies held. Alongside these, there has also been a global 'boom' in the building of memorial museums; almost every major genocide or authoritarian regime in the twentieth century now has a museum or a memorial dedicated to remembering and to educating subsequent generations. In this article I will set the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute (AGMI) into the global context of genocide museums, those guardians of memory and meaning.<sup>1</sup> Just as comparative historical analysis has enhanced our understanding of both the specificities of the Armenian genocide and the phenomenon of genocide more generally,<sup>2</sup> so too can a comparative approach to the memorialisation of genocide illuminate how contexts influence remembrance and representation, and the processes by which the

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1. This article arises from the research I was able to complete at the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, whilst holder of the Museum-Institute's first Raphael Lemkin Scholarship. I am immensely grateful to the Director, Hayk Demoyan, Suren Manukyan, Asya Darbinyan, and the rest of the staff at AGMI for the opportunity and the support I received during my stay.

My doctoral thesis (2014), for which I held the Reid Scholarship at Royal Holloway, University of London, is entitled 'Representing Genocide: The Holocaust As Paradigm?', and is a comparative analysis of cultural representations of the Armenian, Jewish, Cambodian, Bosnian and Rwandan genocides, using film, literature, photography and memorialisation as sources. Some of the research for this article was generously funded by the Friendly Hand.

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2. Some good examples include Donald Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide: Imperialism, Nationalism and the Destruction of the Ottoman Armenians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Robert Melson, *Revolution and Genocide: On the Origins of the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Hans-Lucas Kieser and Dominick J. Schaller, eds., *Der Völkermord an der Armeniern und die Shoah* (Zürich: Chronos, 2002); Hilmar Kaiser, "Genocide at the Twilight of the Ottoman Empire," in *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies*, eds. Donald Bloxham and A. Dirk Moses (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).



events are made meaningful to the descendants of the victims and the rest of the world in the aftermath.<sup>3</sup> The vast majority of research into memory and representation has been done within the remit of Holocaust Studies, but this memory boom especially allows us to expand and refine our understanding and analyses of how circumstances shape the remembrance of traumatic events. In this vein, I argue here that although the museum, and the Tsitsernakaberd memorial complex in which it is located, is in many ways comparable to other memorial museums – in particular the purpose-built Holocaust museums in Europe, America, and Israel – the Turkish denial of the genocide had a deep impact, whether subconsciously or not, upon the design of the permanent exhibition. This exhibition ran from 1995 to 2013, with various updates and additions as further donations were made to the institution, and (at the time of writing) is being substantially revised and extended for the centenary anniversary in 2015.

The original memorial complex was completed in 1967. In Soviet Armenia before 1965, the genocide had never been officially or publicly memorialised as a national loss; on the fiftieth anniversary, crowds congregated on Lenin Square in central Yerevan and eventually public protest broke out against the continual non-remembrance of the genocide. The Genocide Memorial was erected quite shortly thereafter on the hill of Tsitsernakaberd, just outside the city centre. Designed by architects Sashur Kalashyan and Artur Tarkhanyan, it deployed the style of Soviet war memorials, and consisted of a huge split obelisk and a massive grey stone mausoleum, made of twelve stone slabs, with an eternal flame set into its centre.<sup>4</sup> Every year, it is the site of the official commemoration on April 24th. The museum itself was not opened until 1995, the eightieth anniversary of the genocide. The exhibition was designed by the museum director and other Armenian historians, and its narration of genocide and national loss was shaped by the very immediate contexts of, firstly, Armenia's nation- and state-building process following its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, and secondly, the conflict with Azerbaijan over the territory of Nagorno-Karabagh<sup>5</sup> (as well as a severe economic crisis). In the national context, then, the exhibition was both responding to and shaping the new layers of meaning added to the genocide's fundamental place in Armenian identity.

On an international level, as with the survivors of other genocides and their descendants, the memory of the genocide is very present amongst Armenians both within Armenia and in the diaspora – although there are, obviously, differences in remembrance and its relationship with ethnic identity between different communities across the globe – and this memory is galvanised by, and often articulated in opposition to, Turkish denial. During

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3. See Paul Williams, *Memorial Museums: The Global Rush to Commemorate Atrocities* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007).

4. See Tsypylma Darieva's excellent article "'The road to Golgotha': Representing loss in post-socialist Armenia," *Focaal – European Journal of Anthropology* 52 (2008): 92-108 for an extended analytical description. See also Darieva, "From Silenced to Voiced: Changing Politics of Memory of Loss in Armenia," in *Representations on the Margins of Europe: Politics and Identities in the Baltic and South Caucasian States*, edited by Tsypylma Darieva and Wolfgang Kaschuba (Frankfurt/New York: Campus Verlag, 2007), 65-88.

5. See Harutyun Marutyan, *Iconography of Armenian Identity: The Memory of Genocide and the Karabagh Movement* (Yerevan: Gitutyan Publishing House of NAS RA, 2009).

the first half of the 1990s, when this exhibition was being designed, the official Turkish history and much of the Turkish historiography still peddled a narrative of 1915 which argued that the subversive acts of Armenians, encouraged by Western meddling in the Ottoman empire, justified the Armenian ‘relocations’ and massacres.<sup>6</sup> Equally, Armenia’s relations with Turkey were increasingly strained following the Nagorno-Karabagh war in 1993. Internationally, it was Bernard Lewis, the American historian of Modern Turkey, who was holding court in the press – he and 68 other international scholars had signed an advertisement which appeared in the *New York Times* in 1985 which questioned the basis of evidence for genocide, and Lewis continued to make revisionist claims in various statements to the French press in the early 1990s; in fact only three national governments – Cyprus, Uruguay and Russia – had officially recognised the Armenian genocide by 1995.<sup>7</sup> These struggles over the recognition of the Armenian genocide were also somewhat overshadowed by the boom in Holocaust memorialisation in the build-up to the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps was occurring, reports of atrocities and camps in the former Yugoslavia were hitting the press, and, a little later, wrangles over the use of the word ‘genocide’ to describe the massacres in Rwanda. This was the context in which the permanent exhibition was designed: the exhibition, I will argue, was working against this denial and the hesitancy surrounding the use of the word ‘genocide’ to describe what happened to Armenians, by seeking to provide its international visitors with irrefutable proof of genocide.

This article is based on an extensive visit to the museum in April 2011, during which I had the chance to observe visitors’ interactions with the exhibition and memorial complex both during the April 24<sup>th</sup> commemorations and outside them, and on my research at other multiple sites and museums of genocide. In the first section of this article, I compare the design of the Tsitsernakaberd memorial complex and the architecture of the museum itself with other genocide museums, and show that in this respect it entirely conforms to global trends. I then discuss the previous permanent exhibition itself, paying particular attention to the artefacts and documents chosen to narrate the genocide, and what that suggested about the underlying message of the museum. Finally, I consider how Armenian and non-Armenian visitors, two very different memory communities, might respond to the museum.

## **Tsitsernakaberd and the museum in comparative perspective**

In physical and formal terms, the Tsitsernakaberd complex is more comparable to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington, DC, Yad Vashem

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6. See Donald Bloxham and Fatma Müge Göçek, “The Armenian Genocide,” in *The Historiography of Genocide*, edited by Dan Stone (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 344-72: 349-50.

7. More recently, alternative voices have sprung up within Turkey, and 21 governments along with various regional governments and human rights-oriented organisations have now recognised the genocide (the majority since 2000). But the Armenian genocide still occupies a somewhat awkward and peripheral position within the global memoryscape – there is a kind of ‘semi-consciousness’ amongst non-Armenians in the West, as historian Donald Bloxham puts it – there is only a consciousness at all because of the special relations of Christian powers with Christian suffering in the Ottoman Empire, but it is a hesitant consciousness because of denial, geopolitics, and changing perceptions of the perpetrator state. Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide*, 230.

in Jerusalem, the Jewish Museum of Berlin, or London's Imperial War Museum (IWM) Holocaust Exhibition than to many of the other genocide museums or memorials in, for example, Bosnia, Rwanda, or Cambodia, or indeed the museums and memorials on former Nazi concentration camp sites, such as at Auschwitz or Dachau. All of these Holocaust museums (or exhibitions within museums, in the case of the IWM) are purpose-built, and have similar institutional objectives of public education, facilitating research, and collecting and maintaining archives. They are also mostly located far from the sites of suffering: although each is heavily imbued with symbolic meaning,<sup>8</sup> they do not have quite the same emotional charge as, for example, the memorials and museums at Auschwitz, the former interrogation centre S-21 in Cambodia, the battery factory in Srebrenica where Muslim refugees were held before the men were separated and killed, or the many churches and other municipal buildings where the victims sought safety in Rwanda, many of which are now preserved as memorials.<sup>9</sup> Yad Vashem is built on the Mount of Remembrance, near to the national cemetery where the father of Zionism, Theodore Herzl, is buried; the museum visit ends with a magnificent view over the hills of Jerusalem from the viewing platform at the end of the building, a finale to and continuation of the museum narrative's underlying (Zionist) message.<sup>10</sup> Tsitsernakaberd is located at the top of a hill above Yerevan, visible from many areas of the city; on a clear day Mount Ararat is visible from the memorial complex. Once visitors emerge from the museum, then, this view of Ararat – that potent symbol of loss in the Armenian community – adds to and consolidates the human loss witnessed in the exhibition: where Yad Vashem offers cathartic redemption, the visit to AGMI ends with a potent reminder of loss.

Both Tsitsernakaberd and Yad Vashem are also quite extensive memorial complexes:<sup>11</sup> there are innumerable memorials on the Yad Vashem campus besides the Historical Museum, from the Children's Memorial and the Avenue of the Righteous Among the Nations, to the numerous memorials dotted around the gardens to the Jewish victims, communities, soldiers and partisans.<sup>12</sup> The focus of the Tsitsernakaberd complex is undoubtedly the original memorials built in 1967, the split obelisk and the massive grey stone mausoleum and eternal flame, which is gradually surrounded every April 24<sup>th</sup> by a ring of flowers left by those on the commemorative march. But the site also holds a Memorial Alley with trees planted in memory of the victims by international delegates, and a memorial wall

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8. See Darieva, "The road to Golgotha," for an overview.

9. For brief descriptions and analyses of all of these, see Williams, *Memorial Museums*, 10, 17-18, 18-19 and *passim*. The only Armenian equivalent would probably be the museum at Der-el-Zor.

10. An excellent and recent discussion of Yad Vashem can be found in Amos Goldberg, "The 'Jewish narrative' in the Yad Vashem global Holocaust Museum," *Journal of Genocide Research* 14:2 (2012): 187-213. He discusses the end-point of the museum as a cathartic narrative at 206-7.

11. The USHMM, JMB, and IWM are all built within rather than on the edge of urban spaces, and thus have less space for such an extensive complex. This is not to say that their locations are not symbolic in themselves: the USHMM is a short walk from the Mall and the White House; Libeskind's Jewish Museum is an extension to the original Jewish Museum in Berlin; London's Holocaust Exhibition is located within its war museum, also unofficially considered the 'national museum' of Britain.

12. The Yad Vashem website has an incomplete list of memorials on its campus: <http://www1.yadvashem.org/jv/en/visiting/map.asp>.

which on one side is carved with the memorial geography of Armenian deportation and suffering, from Constantinople to Der-el-Zor, and on the other holds earth from the graves of prominent non-Armenians who helped the Armenians during the genocide, including Franz Werfel and Armin Wegner, and most recently on April 21 2011, Maria Jacobsen and Alma Johansson. Near to the wall are memorials, in the form of traditional *khachkars*, to the memory of Armenian victims of massacres in Sumgait and Baku, as well as to the defenders of Gandzak (Gence).<sup>13</sup> Both complexes are heavy with symbolism, then, drawing together victims and altruistic saviours in the service of an ethnic and transnational remembrance.

In a broader sense, one can also relate Israel's national memorial landscape to Armenia's: across each, one finds smaller memorials dotted around the landscape, generally funded and commissioned by individuals and local communities (some or all of whom may have been survivors) or municipal authorities.<sup>14</sup> In accordance with the victim group's central tenets of remembrance, the majority are monuments which commemorate suffering and loss, but some are dedicated to the well-known acts of resistance, such as the two largest resistance memorials, Beit Lohamei HaGeta'ot (Ghetto Fighters' House Museum) and the monument in Musaler (Musa Dag) village in Armavir province; both are smaller museums telling the tale of the best-known act of resistance, although the Israeli museum is much larger and also holds an extensive archive.<sup>15</sup> The crucial difference between the Israeli and Armenian memorial landscape is that while Israeli memory of the Holocaust has, obviously, changed since 1945, Soviet rule had a much deeper impact upon the nature of Armenian remembrance until 1991. Many of the Armenian memorials were built in the decade or so following the fiftieth anniversary demonstrations in 1965, and had to conform to the dictates of socialist remembrance – all were designed in what was effectively still a socialist realist style, although the usual tropes of war and loss now signified a very different kind of loss – whereas those built after 1991 tend to follow the more traditional style of a *khachkar* and inscription with the date of 1915.

Inside the Museum at Tsitsernakaberd itself, the architecture and aesthetic design too is comparable to these Western-designed, purpose-built museums. In the 1990s and 2000s a spate of Holocaust museums were opened – the USHMM in 1993, the Jewish Museum Berlin in 1999, the IWM Holocaust Exhibition in 2000, and the Shoah Museum in Paris, the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin, and the new Yad Vashem Holocaust History Museum in 2005 – all of which eschewed the traditional museum architecture of big open spaces, white walls, and artefacts in display cases.<sup>16</sup> Instead, these museums

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13. See in general Darieva, "The Road to Golgotha," 96-104.

14. On the memorial landscape in Armenia see <http://www.armenian-genocide.org/memorials.html> and *Memorials of Sorrow, Remembrance and Struggle* (Yerevan: Ministry of Diaspora of the Republic of Armenia, 2010). On Israel, see James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1993), 209-81.

15. The monument/museum at Musaler is visible here: [http://www.armenian-genocide.org/Memorial.17/current\\_category.52/offset.10/memorials\\_detail.html](http://www.armenian-genocide.org/Memorial.17/current_category.52/offset.10/memorials_detail.html). For Beit Lohamei HaGeta'ot, see <http://www.gfh.org.il/Eng/>.

16. For an excellent overview on these broad changes in museology, see Sharon Macdonald, "Expanding Museum Studies: An Introduction," in *A Companion to Museum Studies*, ed. Sharon MacDonald (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006): 1-12, and the rest of the essays in that volume.

together marked the inauguration of a new commemorative aesthetic, what I call an ‘affective architecture’, where the interior space and decoration of the building is designed in order to elicit certain sensory and emotional reactions, which chime with the exhibition or memorial’s content and intended meaning. One of the most famous examples of this affective architecture is found in Daniel Libeskind’s Jewish Museum Berlin, where the tight, twisted, and disorienting spaces create some of the feeling of claustrophobia and disorientation which the victims themselves felt;<sup>17</sup> the same techniques of low-ceilinged, constrictive, and dark spaces are used in all of the above-mentioned Holocaust museums, and indeed also in other museums dedicated to conflict and loss – from the Kigali National Genocide Museum in Rwanda (designed under the auspices of the UK charity Aegis Trust) to the Imperial War Museum North in Manchester.<sup>18</sup>

Built and opened in 1995, at a roughly similar time to the earlier museums of this trend, the AGMI used many of the same techniques. There are none of the architectural twists and turns – the exhibition was housed in a large, smooth circle built around an inner courtyard, although one could say that the zig-zag progress visitors made from one side of the curve to the other echoes, in a symbolic sense, the wandering paths taken by the deportees in 1915 – but the rooms devoted to the genocide period had a constricted feel, and the museum also used dim lighting, colour, and physical descent to accentuate the visitor’s feeling of unease and unsettlement. At Yad Vashem, the USHMM, and the IWM, the exhibitions begin with prewar Jewish life on the top floor of the exhibition (or a physically higher level), and the décor changes to blacks and greys, and the lighting is dimmed, as visitors literally and symbolically descend to lower floors to reach the part of the exhibition which deals with the ghettos, deportations, and the concentration camps. At Yad Vashem, the floor of the long, thin building then rises again into the triumphal viewing platform mentioned above. The AGMI museum exhibition made use of colour, lighting, and physical space in much the same way: one descended into the museum from the memorial complex outside, and then a few more steps into the exhibition itself. The first square stone hall, which contained a huge map of ‘historic Armenia’ and display cases with artefacts showing the vibrancy of pre-WWI Armenian society, was relatively spacious and has some natural light from a skylight above; but in the main curved exhibition hall, which documented the deportations and atrocities, the walls were much darker, the ceilings lower, the lighting dim – the only windows to the outside shaped as thin Christian crosses – and large reproductions of atrocity photographs taken mostly by Armin Wegner loomed over the display cases and the visitors. At the end of the exhibition, one ascended again to the light of the reception hall and then the memorial complex outside, with its view of Ararat. Like its contemporaries, then, the AGMI also attempts to enhance the message of its exhibition with an affective architecture.

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17. There is a huge literature on the architecture of Libeskind, but begin with James E. Young, *At Memory’s Edge: After-Images Of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2000), chapter 6 (“Daniel Libeskind’s Jewish Museum in Berlin”), 152-183, and other relevant essays in the book. Libeskind has used a similar style for the Danish Jewish Museum, Copenhagen, and the Felix-Nussbaum-Haus in Osnabrück, Germany.

18. Although it is worth noting that there are not many purpose-built museums to other genocides – Kigali is an exception – since most are housed in the sites where torture and murder took place.



## The exhibition

However, there were subtle differences between the content and the underlying thrust of the AGMI's 1995-2013 exhibition and those of other Holocaust and genocide museums – and these differences, I would argue, were a measure of the (in some ways quite distortive) impact of denial on the representation and the historiography of the Armenian genocide.<sup>19</sup> Although the exhibition itself did not discuss denial, the unrelenting stream of atrocity photographs, reproduction of orders from the Ottoman Turk authorities, and harrowing eyewitness reports – uninterrupted by the temporary and partial relief which survivor testimonies or more detailed analysis of individual case studies can bring – amounted, cumulatively, to a 'case' for genocide and a refutation of denial.

Over the past few decades, a growing trend in Holocaust research and representation has sought to integrate the experiences and voices of the victims alongside the words and deeds of the perpetrators, for the historical perspective they add, for the insight they give into the victims' suffering, and for the empathy they create amongst visitors for the victims.<sup>20</sup> The Holocaust museums I have mentioned above all construct a careful historical narrative of the events, supported by documentation and artefacts, and then intersperse these with excerpts of survivor testimony, with individual or family photographs of victims, and with poignant personal belongings (for example, shoes, clothing, pairs of glasses, a diary, a pipe – in a smaller version of the famous rooms full of shoes, suitcases, and hair on display at Auschwitz).<sup>21</sup> Many also list the names of the victims, and perhaps their birth and death dates, on walls and in books, to try to communicate the sheer scale of loss and destruction.<sup>22</sup> All of these techniques individualise the victims, and invite

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19. Academic scholarship is beginning to move past the burden placed on it by the need to refute denial and prove genocide. For a recent historiographical analysis, see Bloxham and Göçek, "The Armenian Genocide". For a brave attempt to move beyond these divisions, see the essays in *A Question of Genocide: Armenians and Turks at the End of the Ottoman Empire*, edited by Norman M. Naimark, Ronald Grigor Suny, and Fatma Müge Göçek (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

20. Debate within Holocaust historiography has been kicked off by Saul Friedländer's efforts to write an 'integrated' history of the Holocaust, in his two-volume work, *Nazi Germany and the Jews: The Years of Persecution, 1933-1939* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1997) and *The Years of Extermination, 1939-1945* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 2007). Dissatisfied with the tendency in Holocaust histories to write using only German sources, he argued that including the voices of the victims (taken from contemporary diaries) would 'tear through seamless interpretation and pierce the (mostly involuntary) smugness of scholarly detachment and "objectivity"' (*Years of Extermination*, xxvi).

21. There are many studies of these displays in different museums. On the use of individual and family portraits to elicit identification, see Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); on the use of oral testimony (specifically in the IWM), see Tony Kushner, "Oral History at the Extremes of Human Experience: Holocaust Testimony in a Museum Setting," *Oral History* 29:2 (2001): 83-94; on the display of objects, see Oren Baruch Stier, *Committed to Memory: Cultural Mediations of the Holocaust* (Amherst/Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003): 110-49. More generally, see Andrea Liss, *Trespassing through Shadows: Memory, Photography and the Holocaust* (Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).

22. Yad Vashem has a Hall of Names, where they hope to collect the names of all 6 million dead (roughly 3 million have been collected thus far); the Shoah Museum in Paris has stone walls engraved with the names of Jewish deportees from France; displayed in the Jewish Museum Berlin are the Gedenkbücher, filled with the names of all those deported from Berlin; in a room in the Ort der Information underneath

visitors of all nationalities, ethnicities, and ages to identify with their plight; in this, they act as a balance to the more shocking and disturbing images of suffering and death, and humanise the presentation. As Louis Bickford and Amy Sodaro have recently noted, this individualising approach is not limited to Holocaust museums, and many other memorial museums around the globe now also try to create empathy in this way.<sup>23</sup>

Although the first hall of the AGMI exhibition displayed some such artefacts in its coverage of pre-war Armenian social and cultural life – photographs of sports teams, of schoolchildren, of community leaders (all of whom, we assume, were swept up into the genocide) – the main part of the exhibition used only photographs of suffering and destruction, the cold orders of the Young Turks, and copies of reports and books written by western diplomats, missionaries, and academics.<sup>24</sup> There was, in fact, very little narrative in the exhibition (the guided tours, available in Armenian, English, Russian, French, and German, provided this); most of the display cases contained a few paragraphs (in four languages) outlining the basic history of the events under discussion – the Hamidian massacres of 1894–6, the 1909 massacres, the murder of the intellectual and religious leaders, the deportations, foreign witnesses and their reactions, and the destruction of Armenian churches and other cultural heritage – but there was no comprehensive causal or explanatory narrative threaded through the exhibition. Visitors to the exhibition were therefore encouraged to spend time studying the images and documents, as the tangible remains of *what happened*.

Of course, in one sense, these artefacts merely illustrated the progression of violence against the Armenians in the crumbling Ottoman Empire, but it is worth noting that they all provide what is classically recognised as ‘hard evidence’ for genocide, and, in the absence of any ‘softer’ evidence (in the form of emotive displays of the victims’ belongings, family photographs, or oral testimony from survivors), amount to something akin to an evidence docket. As visitors entered the exhibition, a panel on the wall to the left in the entrance hall quoted the UN definition of genocide as ratified in the Genocide Convention of 1948, which

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the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, two voices list the names and brief biographies of victims; the USHMM displays glass panels with Jewish first names engraved on them. This trend towards naming the victims individually is not limited to the Holocaust; the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC is a well-known and provocative example. On this, and more generally, see Marita Sturken’s masterful *Tangled Memories: the Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), chapters 2, 6, and *passim*.

23. Louis Bickford and Amy Sodaro, “Remembering Yesterday to Protect Tomorrow: The Internationalisation of a New Commemorative Paradigm,” in *Memory and the Future: Transnational Politics, Ethics and Society*, eds. Yifat Gutman, Adam D. Brown and Amy Sodaro (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). There are also walls of names at the Srebrenica-Potočari Memorial Museum in Bosnia, and at a few Rwandan memorials (although these are only very partially completed). The Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, has famously filled room after room with prints of the photographs of victims taken by the Khmer Rouge when they entered the torture centre. Both the Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre and the Srebrenica-Potočari Memorial Museum display the personal possessions of victims in much the same style as Holocaust museums.

24. Of course, the nature of the Armenian genocide (deportations from homes, accompanied by robbery and looting) means that survivors were left with far fewer possessions which, in turn, *could* be donated and displayed in the Museum (there is a roughly similar situation with the Cambodian genocide; the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum displays only the clothes of the victims and the photographs that were taken as they entered the prison).



briefed visitors for the exhibition itself. In the main exhibition hall, above each display case a large reproduction of one or more photographs were hung, most of which were taken from the collection of Armin Wegner. Almost without exception, they documented deportation, starvation, execution, and mass death; these are precisely the types of images pragmatically accepted as historical evidence in both public and legal fora.<sup>25</sup> Likewise, the ‘smoking guns’ were reproduced by the exhibition – large facsimiles of an order from Enver Pasha and two telegrams from Talaat Pasha, ordering the extermination of the Armenians and its concealment from the outside world.

Aside from the photographs, the main descriptions of the deportations and killings were then in fact provided by the written reports of foreign diplomats and missionaries. A substantial proportion of the display cases exhibited examples of news reports in the foreign press, telegrams from diplomats and missionaries (often drawing on testimony from contemporary eyewitnesses), speeches in foreign parliaments, and the published diaries or memoirs of these foreign witnesses (as well as the biographies of a select few). Many of the passages selected for display repeated the phrase ‘extermination of the Armenian race’ or ‘destroy the Armenian race as a race’ – an echo not just of the Young Turk leaders’ orders, but also of the legal definition of genocide which was to pass into international law thirty-three years later.<sup>26</sup> In one sense, this functioned as a reminder of the sense of outrage and responsibility the West felt for Armenians at the time,<sup>27</sup> but, rereading this from an evidentiary point of view, one could note that many more display cases were given over to foreign reports and scholarly books on the genocide than those displaying survivor testimonies – and, indeed, since the majority of testimonies were published memoirs, only their front covers or title pages were visible behind the glass,

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25. On the photographs of the Armenian genocide, see Tessa Hofmann and Gerayer Koutcharian, “‘Images that Horrify and Indict’: Pictorial Documents on the Persecution and Extermination of Armenians from 1877 to 1922,” *Armenian Review* 45: 1-2 (1992): 53-184, and Sybil Milton, “Armin T. Wegner: Polemicist for Armenian Rights and Jewish Human Rights,” *Armenian Review* 42:4 (1989): 17-40. There are, of course, many intermediate difficulties with using historical photographs as evidence, including the importance of knowing the identity of the photographer, the date, and the location (perhaps the photographer most especially, since his/her perspective on and reaction to the events directly influences the content and framing of the image); see, in the Armenian context, the essays by Abraham D. Krikorian and Eugene Taylor, available at <http://groong.usc.edu/orig/Probing-the-Photographic-Record.html>. But there are also knottier problems related to what such photographs cannot depict. In the strict legal sense, photographs cannot prove genocide itself, since one cannot photograph *intent* (for an analogous argument in the context of the Holocaust, see Judith Keilbach, “Photographs, Symbolic Images, and the Holocaust: On the (Im)Possibility Of Depicting Historical Truth,” *History and Theory* 48:2 (2009): 54-76, especially pages 60-1). Individually, these images show deportations, starvation, execution, and mass death; cumulatively, they show the *outcome* of a systematic policy. As genocide scholar Dirk Moses puts it, historians can ‘construe intent through action’. See A. Dirk Moses, “An Antipodean Genocide? The Origins of the Genocidal Moment in the Colonization of Australia,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 2:1 (2000): 89-106.

26. This is a striking aspect of many more documents than those on display. See, e.g., Ara Sarafian, comp. and intro., *United States Official Documents on the Armenian Genocide, 1915-17* (Princeton/London: Taderon Press in association with the Gomidas Institute, 2004).

27. Similarly, in her analysis of the meaning of transferring earth from the graves of those who helped the Armenians to Tsitsernakaberd, Tsypylma Darieva argues that the memory of the genocide is thereby converted ‘from an ethnic notion of loss and death into a global memory of forgotten human loss.’ Darieva, “From Silenced to Voiced,” 84.

rather than their words. Possibly foreign diplomats' telegrams and newspaper reports would be thought more 'impartial' by visitors to the museum – although there is no real reason to believe that survivors' testimony would be viewed particularly differently unless a visitor was already inclined to distrust it.<sup>28</sup> The exhibition ended with a section on the internationally-administered refugee camps and orphanages, and the efforts to rescue women and children who had been forcibly adopted into Muslim households – thus, symbolically, the rebirth of the Armenian nation – before visitors returned to the main entrance hall.

As I noted before, in some ways these artefacts were merely well-chosen illustrations of the basic and familiar narrative of the Armenian genocide. But subconsciously or not, the museum also seemed to have taken on the burden of proof. Instead of the detail of video testimonies or personal belongings and other artefacts, what visitors were given to study is hard evidence – documentation, photographs, and witness reports. Indeed, at the end of the guided tour, the guides often asked visitors to consider for themselves if this was a genocide. Returning to the main entrance hall, they were directed to look at the museum's glass-fronted inner courtyard. Laid out at their feet was a traditional grey stone *khachkar*, representing the Armenian victims, and the semicircular wall was divided into twelve sections, each carved with statements condemning the genocide by those foreign politicians, diplomats, and writers, representing witnesses in a courtroom. The copy of the UN Genocide Convention, which visitors passed as they entered the exhibition, hovered within eyesight on the wall; the guide asks the visitor to judge for themselves.

Of course, memorial museums dedicated to the Holocaust and other genocides also display the relevant artefacts and documentation which is evidence for genocide, but my point here is that in none of these museums does the need to prove genocide seem so insistent or urgent. Holocaust museums only display artefacts which can be reliably authenticated, so as not to provide openings for Holocaust deniers;<sup>29</sup> in Cambodia and Rwanda, the skulls and bones of victims, which are often displayed in memorials, serve as evidence against denial.<sup>30</sup> The memorial museum to the Srebrenica

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28. It is interesting to compare the use of survivor testimony in legal trials here. The Nuremberg trials, in the immediate aftermath of the war, relied mostly on Nazi documents; the lawyers prosecuting David Irving for Holocaust denial in the UK in 2000 called only historians, and no survivors, as witnesses, for fear that the defence would expose 'faults' in their memories and jeopardise the case. In contrast, the trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem in 1961 famously permitted survivors to testify at length, even if their experiences were somewhat tangential to the case itself. However, this trial (and this testimony) is widely credited with bringing the Holocaust back into the world's attention, as well as bringing about a change in how the Holocaust was perceived in Israel itself. For a general overview, see Donald Bloxham, "From Streicher to Sawoniuk: The Holocaust in the Courtroom," in *The Historiography of the Holocaust*, ed. Dan Stone (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004): 397-419.

29. For example, the project director of the IWM's Holocaust Exhibition, Suzanne Bardgett, stated this as a concern whilst they were gathering artefacts for the exhibition. The only inauthentic object in the exhibition is a large-scale model of Auschwitz.

30. Rwanda has a different set of issues surrounding denial. Undoubtedly, there are Hutu who deny that genocide happened, but the government also instituted a law under which anyone who includes the politically moderate Hutu (who were also targeted during the genocide) as 'genocide victims' can be

victims is an interesting comparator in this respect: Bosnian Serbs routinely deny that genocide happened, and indeed there are alternative home-made museums about 'Serbian genocide' just a short drive away.<sup>31</sup> But the museum does not engage with this denial, and indeed is very much aimed at the Bosnian Muslim and international community: the bodies of the victims who are now interred in the cemetery across the road from the museum have been forensically identified by DNA, and the museum itself is very simple, displaying only the brief biographies of fifteen representative victims, together with a personal possessions – pipe, book, a Koran – found with them in the grave, and a film which combines an outline of the events with very emotive testimony from surviving mothers and wives of the victims. Each of these four cases of genocide, though, has international recognition, whereas, as I noted in the introduction, in the early 1990s when this exhibition was being formulated, Armenians were struggling, and indeed are still struggling, against outright denial, geopolitics and misplaced caution in order to achieve global recognition. Interestingly, these other museums fit far more squarely in Louis Bickford and Amy Sodaro's 'new commemorative paradigm' in memorial museums – which, crucially, they define as a strategy of memorialisation in societies transitioning from conflict, dictatorship and authoritarianism which aims to help communities in confronting and coming to terms with the past.<sup>32</sup> Since the Ottoman past is not just unfronted but still hotly contested, one can begin to understand these differences in the AGMI's exhibition.<sup>33</sup>

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prosecuted, accusing them of propagating relativism, genocide denial, and the 'double genocide theory'. See Lars Waldorf, "Instrumentalising Genocide: The RPF's Campaign against 'Genocide Ideology,'" in *Remaking Rwanda: State Building and Human Rights After Mass Violence*, eds. Scott Straus and Lars Waldorf (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011).

31. Paul B. Miller, "Contested Memories: The Bosnian Genocide in Serb and Muslim Minds," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8:3 (2006): 311-24.

32. Bickford and Sodaro, "Remembering Yesterday to Protect Tomorrow," 68-9. These museums, they argue, operate under the rubric of 'never again', and try to prevent atrocities and genocide in the future via education, experience, and empathy: by educating younger generations about past injustices, by encouraging them to 'experience' the past for themselves at immersive museums, and by creating empathy with the victims through displays of personal belongings, family photographs, and lists of names, these museums hope to enact a moral transformation in their visitors which will encourage them to take action against genocide and promote democratic values (77-82). Quite correctly, the question the ability of these techniques alone to inspire the kind of moral transformation in their visitors which will encourage them to take action against genocide, and promote democratic values (82-3).

33. The AGMI is thus an excellent example which shows us very clearly the limits of this paradigm's applicability in cases of contested pasts. Other examples of 'contested pasts' which reinforce my point: in ways not dissimilar to the Armenian case, for example, in present-day Spain there is so little agreement about the Civil War of 1936-39 and its aftermath that a museum along the lines of the 'new commemorative paradigm' would only be met with deeper contestation. See Helen Graham, *The War and its Shadow: Spain's Civil War in Europe's Long Twentieth Century* (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2012), especially chapter 7. Somewhat differently, Lithuania's Museum of Genocide Victims in Vilnius is hardly an example of the more open 'confronting of the past' which the paradigm suggests, since it minimises the (mainly Jewish and communist) victims of the Nazis' cleansing policies, in favour of emphasising the repression of Lithuanian national identity and the Lithuanians killed under the Soviet regime. See A. Craig Wight and J. John Lennon, "Selective interpretation and eclectic human heritage in Lithuania," *Tourism Management* 28 (2007): 519-29.

## **Conclusion: the visitors**

The concept of ‘familiarity’ is always quite useful to think about when considering how visitors might respond to a museum, but, as we will see, is particularly apt in the case of the AGMI because of the nature of its visitor base (which is primarily Armenian, but also includes a fairly large number of non-Armenians – mostly European or North American – and the many foreign delegates who are taken on a tour of the museum as part of the official State protocol). At the time of its opening and increasingly so since, most Western visitors would in all likelihood have visited at least one Holocaust museum before, and would have noticed some of the differences in exhibition style discussed above – but more importantly they will also have arrived with a passing knowledge of the Holocaust, gleaned from popular films such as *Schindler’s List*, various literature including survivor testimonies, and these museums. This passing knowledge of the Holocaust underpins most Westerners’ conception of genocide – as the mass killing of a minority group by a fanatical state<sup>34</sup> – and although few will know much of the history of the Armenian genocide, the text and images which they encountered in the AGMI exhibition will certainly have seemed familiar, and fitted easily into this general conception of genocide.

Since we can assume that Armenians do not need convincing that these events constitute genocide, it is worth considering what they might nevertheless have taken from the exhibition and memorial complex.<sup>35</sup> In part, visiting the exhibition and the memorial complex can act as a confirmation of identity, and joining the commemorative march on April 24<sup>th</sup> is in a sense a performance of duty. The exhibition narrative itself will of course have been extremely familiar to most Armenian visitors; the events it covered were, in fact, a very basic and standard narrative of the genocide, since (for example) there was little detail on the individual histories of deportation and massacre from the areas now in Turkey, in which the relatives of many visiting diaspora Armenians will have been born.<sup>36</sup> What the exhibition provided visitors with was the opportunity to engage with the authentic objects which narrated their history: although some of the visitors I observed in April 2011 wandered through the exhibition without really pausing (I suspect because they had seen it many times before),<sup>37</sup> many also seemed to be engrossed in discussing individual items in the display cases.

In this sense, the exhibition did very much function as a guardian of meaning and memory, as I suggested in the introduction. Memorial museums increasingly need to be

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34. The UN Genocide Convention’s definition (and that of genocide scholars) is of course much broader than this – and indeed the AGMI exhibition also provides evidence for genocide as the destruction of cultural buildings and as the forcible removal of children from one group to another.

35. Of course, these encounters and experiences will also change over time and depending on context. See Darieva’s discussion of how interpretations of the symbolism behind the obelisk and eternal flame have evolved since 1967 – through Soviet rule and during the Karabagh movement – in “The road to Golgotha,” 98.

36. Raymond H. Kévorkian’s comprehensive *The Armenian Genocide: A Complete History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), provides such detail.

37. In this sense, the visit to the museum on April 24th really does seem as a ‘performance of duty’.

analysed and understood from a global or transnational perspective – both because they themselves are part of global trends, and because their visitors are also often from different corners of the globe – but this case study also shows how deep an impact specific national contexts and histories, and the contestation of those histories, can have on the remembrance and representation of genocide.

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# TRAUMA AND IDENTITY: ON STRUCTURAL PARTICULARITIES OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE AND JEWISH HOLOCAUST<sup>1,2</sup>

Harutyun Marutyan

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Comparison of the Armenian Genocide and Jewish Holocaust memories allows us not only to discuss questions important for Armenian sociopolitical and scientific thought regarding the start of the 21st century, but also for deriving useful lessons. The problems are examined from the point of view of memory studies and identity politics. The internationally recognized term “Holocaust” was used to characterize the Armenian massacres as far back as the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The perception of a “unique” Holocaust and “primacy” of the Armenian Genocide in the 20th century are actually different characteristics of the same phenomenon: in the case of examination of the question from this point of view, the factor of “historiographical competitiveness” is gaining a secondary role, although it still exists in different manifestations of the collective memory. Giving priority to the ideological factor in the assessment of the organization and implementation of genocides allows Jews and Armenians alike to avoid the manifestations of ethnic opposition and to appear to the world in a more (from the point of view of Western values) preferable fashion. The Jewish institute of The Righteous Among the Nations cannot serve as a model for Armenians because of the absence of the factor of unselfishness (in a great variety of cases) in the rescue of Armenian lives. In the Jewish, as well as in the Armenian memory, there is a fight against the stereotype of “being slaughtered like sheep”: in the Jewish case, the activities are mostly transferred to the field of “moral resistance”, while in the Armenian case, the resistance of the Armenian people has not been emphasized as has the Jewish struggles, underground fights and rebellions. The process of the Armenian Genocide memory becoming a part of the American national memory in its certain manifestations repeats the approaches of the Jewish community of the United States. There are also some similarities in the case of choosing the sites for memorials, etc.

Comparative historiography of peoples with similar historical fates contributes not only to scientific thought but to our common humanity. In this regard, the comparison of the memories and identity politics of the Armenian Genocide and the Jewish Holocaust allows

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2. In memory of my teacher Mikhail G. Rabinovich and his wife Elena Poghosian.

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us not only to discuss questions that hold value for Armenian sociopolitical and scientific thought of the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century regarding the study of Armenian Genocide, but also to derive valuable lessons with far reaching consequences. Most importantly, these lessons contribute to the prevention of future genocide. A number of scholarly articles have been written on the subject of comparison of the Armenian Genocide and Jewish Holocaust, by Armenian, as well as Jewish and American researchers.<sup>3</sup> My task is not to add new research to this list. It is rather to consider how the memories of the Genocide and of Holocaust are *perceived*, and how they *work* to stimulate people to act.

## **Identity and Naming Dramatic Events of the Past**

As it is known, the word holocaust was originally derived from the Greek word *holokauston*, meaning “a completely (*holos*) burnt (*kaustos*) sacrificial offering” to a god. “*Shoah*” (calamity) is the Hebrew term for the Holocaust. It is used by many Jews, as well as a growing number of other people, due to theological discomfort with the literal meaning of the word “Holocaust”; these groups believe it is theologically offensive to imply that the Jews of Europe were a sacrifice to God. Nevertheless, today whenever the word “Holocaust” is used, despite the opinions of different scholars about its semantic boundaries, people understand that it refers to the killing by Nazis and their allies of six million Jews during the Second World War. Though this term denotes a phenomenon known to practically everybody, it has become thoroughly associated to a specific ethnic group: the Jewish people. Armenians too have their own term for their genocide (which has purely Armenian usage) – “Metz Yeghern” (the great calamity). The Armenian word “yeghern”, connoting such meanings as “evil, peril, crime, disaster, accident, [and] loss,” has long been used in Armenian medieval literature<sup>4</sup>, while the term “mets” refers to the great scale of this calamity. After the events of 1915 and before the term “genocide” gained wide circulation in the mid-1960s, the term “Metz Yeghern” was used to describe the large-scale massacres carried out by the Turks and the Kurds in the Ottoman Empire. Today the terms “Metz Yeghern” and “Genocide” are still synonymous to the Armenian

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3. See, for example: Franklin H. Littell, “Holocaust and Genocide: The Essential Dialectic,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 2: 1 (1987): 95-104; Vahakn N. Dadrian, “The Convergent Aspects of the Armenian and Jewish Cases of Genocide. A Reinterpretation of the Concept of Holocaust,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 3: 2 (1988): 151-69; Robert F. Melson, “The Armenian Genocide as Precursor and Prototype of Twentieth-Century Genocide,” in *Is the Holocaust Unique?: Perspectives on Comparative Genocide*, edited with an Introduction by Alan S. Rosenbaum, with a foreword by Israel W. Charny (Colorado and Oxford: Westview Press, 1996), 88-93, 97; Vahakn N. Dadrian, “The Comparative Aspects of the Armenian and Jewish Cases of Genocide: A Sociohistorical Perspective,” in *Is the Holocaust Unique?*, 101-35; Idem, “The Historical and Legal Interconnections Between the Armenian Genocide and the Jewish Holocaust: From Impunity to Retributive Justice,” *The Yale Journal of International Law* 23: 2 (Summer 1998): 503-59; Tigran Matosyan, *Hayots tseghaspanutyun yev hreakan Holoqost: hamematman pordz* [Armenian Genocide and Jewish Holocaust: Attempt of Comparison] (Yerevan: Hayots Tseghaspanutyun Tangaran-Institut, 2005) (in Armenian); Donald Bloxham, “Organized Mass Murder: Structure, Participation, and Motivation in Comparative Perspective,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 22: 2 (2008): 203-45. See for details: Tigran Matosyan, op. cit., 4-12.

4. Gabriel Avetikian, Khachatur Syurmelian, and Mkrtich Avgerian. *New Wordbook of Old Armenian*, volume 1 (Yerevan: Yerevan University Press, 1836/1979), 654 (in Armenian).

people, and have almost identical usage.<sup>5</sup> However, when President Obama used “Medz Yeghern” in his statements of April 24, 2009-2014 addressed to Armenians, the term was legally far from being an equivalent of “genocide,”<sup>6</sup> and did nothing to assist the cause of international recognition of the Armenian Genocide. By the way, the same formulation was once used by Pope John Paul II.<sup>7</sup>

The translation of “holocaust” in Armenian, “voghjakizum,” manifests certain ambiguity: the first part of the term, “voghj,” has the meanings – “all” and “alive,” while “kizum” means “burning.” Thus the term can also be understood as “burning alive.” Maybe *this* is what Vahakn Dadrian, an outstanding specialist of the history of the Armenian Genocide, had in mind when comparing the Jewish Holocaust with the Armenian Genocide:

In one particular respect ...the Armenian experience of World War I comes closer to the concept of holocaust than the Jewish one, in the strictest sense of the word. Tens of thousands of Armenians were burnt alive in several regions of the interior of Turkey. Whereas in the Jewish case the gas chambers almost always preceded the ovens, in the Armenian case the stables, haylofts, barns and pits were inexorably substituted for both contraptions.<sup>8</sup>

While historians are well aware of the facts about Armenians having been burnt alive by the Turks, ordinary citizens have this memory mainly as a result of literary works. Of these, the most vivid is a poem by Siamanto (Atom Yarjanian), a Western Armenian writer and a victim of the Genocide, called, “The Dance,” which, long ago, was included in Armenian school curricula. The poem describes an episode from the 1909 massacres in Cilicia, when Turks stripped Armenian women and made them dance, and then poured “a barrel of oil” over the naked bodies to burn them alive. It is in this poem that the expression “O, human justice, let me spit at your forehead” was first used. Later, due to its expressiveness and pathos, it became a much used adage in the posters of the Karabagh Movement (1988-1990).<sup>9</sup> Another work, Zareh Vorberian’s “The Blazing Dance,” published in 1965, in Beirut, describes a similar episode after the defence of Urfa (formerly Edesia). It is characteristic that, conditioned by the above-mentioned works yet dormant, this memory came to the foreground only after the Sumgait events (February 27-29, 1988), where the Azerbaijanis identified with Turks applied the same methods to half dead Armenians.<sup>10</sup>

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5. In the Google search system the term “Holocaust” appears 5.07 million times, “Shoah” – 0.73 million times, “Armenian Genocide” – 0.36 million times and “Medz Yeghern” – 0.03 million times (retrieved September 12, 2014).

6. See, for example: Rouben Adalian, “President Obama’s Statement on the Armenian Genocide,” *The ISG Newsletter* 42 (2009): 13.

7. [http://www.genocide-museum.am/eng/Prayer\\_of\\_John\\_Paul\\_II\\_Memorial\\_of\\_Tzitzernagaberd.php](http://www.genocide-museum.am/eng/Prayer_of_John_Paul_II_Memorial_of_Tzitzernagaberd.php)

8. Vahakn N. Dadrian, “The Convergent Aspects of the Armenian and Jewish Cases of Genocide. A Reinterpretation of the Concept of Holocaust,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol.3, no.2 (1998): 165.

9. See for details, Harutyun Marutyan, *Iconography of Armenian Identity. Vol. 1: The Memory of Genocide and the Karabagh Movement (Anthropology of Memory 2)* (Yerevan: Gitutyun Press, 2009), 145-149.

10. The same type of crime was pictured also in Atom Egoyan’s film “Ararat” (2002).

I think it is relevant to note that as far back as in September 10, 1895, i.e. nearly 40 years before the Jewish Holocaust began, *The New York Times* headlined a story with the title, “Another Armenian Holocaust,”<sup>11</sup> which described the Armenian massacres. During the last days of December of 1895, Armenians who had sought refuge in the Armenian Church of Urfa were brutally killed by Turks. A missionary, Ms. Corinne Shattuck, used the expression “a great holocaust” in her letter (published in *The New York Times*), underlining the religious aspect of the tragedy—Christian Armenians massacred by Muslim Turks and Kurds.<sup>12</sup> In 1898, a socialist French-Jewish journalist, Bernard Lazare, called the slaughter of Armenians between 1894 and 1896 *holocaust*, and even Winston Churchill described the “massacre of countless thousands of defenseless Armenians” during the World War I as an “administrative holocaust.”<sup>13</sup> Duckett Z. Ferriman’s *The Young Turks and the Truth about the Holocaust at Adana in Asia Minor, during April, 1909* was published in London in 1913, describing the massacre of the Armenians in Adana in 1909,<sup>14</sup> and was reprinted by the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute in 2009.

## **The Unique or Comparable**

Holocaust historians often separate the holocaust of Jews from other genocides of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, defining it as an “unique” phenomenon not comparable with any other genocide. This is how it is both presented in professional literature and widely advocated. It is typical that such a formulation as “Holocaust and Genocide Studies” came to being and has become a separate academic trend. The main argument in its favor includes not only the well-organized nature of the mass extermination of the Jews and its scale, but also the fact that the Jews were not offered or forced to change their religion in order to save themselves, whereas with Armenians it has been repeatedly stated that tens, or rather hundreds, of thousands of Armenians had been forced to accept Islam and thus to be saved.

Armenian historians more often put the emphasis on the facts that the Armenian Genocide was the first of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as many of its methods were used in the Holocaust; while the mass killings were committed on the territory of origin of the victims and had led to its expropriation (which is also a unique fact with respect to genocides), etc. These two

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11. <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=9D05E5DD113DE433A25753C1A96F9C94649ED-7CF>

12. “Three Days of Butchery; A Woman Describes the Massacre of Armenians in Ourfa. Not Less than 3.500 were killed. Terrible Slaughter in a Church.” *New York Times*, February 17, 1896; Rouben Adalian, “Hamidian (Armenian) Massacres,” <http://www.armenian-genocide.org/hamidian.html>; Richard Hovannisian, “The Armenian Question in the Ottoman Empire 1876 to 1914,” in *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times*, ed. Richard Hovannisian, Volume II (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), 223.

13. Winston Churchill, *The World Crisis, vol. 5, Aftermath 1918–1928* (New York: C. Scribner’s sons, 1929), 157; Tessa Hofmann, “The Affirmation of the Genocide of the Armenians. A Human Rights Defender’s Point of View,” [http://www.proarmenia.am/eng-2003/en-Tessa\\_Hofmann.htm](http://www.proarmenia.am/eng-2003/en-Tessa_Hofmann.htm); David B. MacDonald, *Identity Politics in the Age of Genocide: The Holocaust and Historical Representation* (London, New York: Routledge, 2008), 128.

14. Duckett Z. Ferriman, *The Young Turks and the Truth about the Holocaust at Adana in Asia Minor, during April, 1909* (London, 1913); <http://www.genocide-museum.am/eng/11.12.2009.php>

genocides do have in fact a number of comparable features. Still, each of them has also its own particular characteristics. Figuratively speaking, they can be described as the two faces of the same coin. From such a perspective it would seem that the separation intention fades considerably. In other words, adopting a comparable genocide studies' lens reveals that both Armenian and Jewish genocides have their own unique characteristics, for in both cases we come across certain phenomena that have occurred for the first time either in the Armenian, or the Jewish genocide. This is an issue, e.g., the differentiation of the Jewish Holocaust from other types of Genocides that can be addressed and can help to resolve or overcome certain difficulties encountered by historians with regards to the similarity and/or difference of the phenomena, even though the "uniqueness" perception and stereotypes will persist for quite a long time.<sup>15</sup>

## **Who is to Blame?**

For several decades now in discussions of the Holocaust, Jewish and American scholars (at least in the USA and the European countries) have emphasized that the guilt is neither with the "Germans" (as a nation), nor with the peoples of Germany's allied countries in World War II, but with the SS, Nazism, fascism, racism and other equivalent ideologies. In other words, they do not give an ethnic qualification to the conflict that took place in the past, but view it as the result of a criminal ideology. Even if some researchers try to put a share of guilt on ethnic Germans or any other of the common people (a most vivid example is Daniel Goldhagen's publication of 1996 in New York: *Hitler's Willing Executioners. Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*,) notable negative responses ensue in both historiographical (including that of the great majority of Jewish authors) and related circles. In the above-said case, the negative response had been so strong that it gave rise to the notion known as "The Goldhagen's Effect."

For nearly a century, Armenian historians have emphasized the ethnicity of the perpetrators of the genocide. Of course, the ideology of the Young Turks has been voiced and written about, and yet the emphasis, in my opinion, has mostly been on the ethnicity of the genocide perpetrators. Such an emphasis may also be conditioned by the level of relations with the side of perpetrators and their legal successors. In the case of the Armenians, the responsibility for the present state of affairs lies first and foremost with the Turkish policy of denial.<sup>16</sup> In turn, this policy has led to the centuries-old persistence of the stereotype of "eternal friends and enemies" (H.J.T. Palmerston). This policy has also been responsible for the stereotype's duration and its active role in contemporary political and civil life. As a consequence, for as long as the Armenian Genocide remains unrecognized by the legal successors of the state that committed it, and for as long as the phenomenon of the "genocide" is not transferred from its current ethnic dimension to that of an ideology, Armenians will have "eternal enemies," which will automatically make room for the presence of an "eternal friends."

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15. By recognizing the common features of genocides as well as their unique characteristics, the comparative approach contributes to preventing future genocide and to ending those that are still ongoing.

16. According to Gregory Stanton, "Denial is the final stage that lasts throughout and always follows a genocide." <http://www.genocidewatch.org/genocide/tenstagesofgenocide.html>

## **Righteous or Mercenary?**

During the years the Holocaust was perpetrated, a vast number of people saved several individual to several thousand Jews, often at the risk of their own lives and that of their relatives. Later, the Jewish people created a rather extensive list of foreigners who had rescued Jews, “The Righteous among the Nations,”<sup>17</sup> thus, also indirectly fighting any possible manifestations of xenophobia among Jews. The fact is that during the Holocaust, not only the Germans but also their allies had been engaged in the annihilation of Jews, be they government officials or common citizens. This was due to the fact that antisemitism had not been a singularly German attitude. Jewish researchers who created “The Righteous Among the Nations” list, would, as they say, think twice before they did something. One of the most significant criteria for being included in the list had been the *selflessness* of the often self-sacrificing assistance. This gave an opportunity to Jews and their future generations to avoid becoming racist. In revealing that, some of the peoples of Europe would do anything to help Jews – often complete strangers – in the time of need, the realization that true humanism was extant among many non-Jews and that manifestations of anti-Semitism had been mostly caused by Nazi propaganda.

Such an attempt was not made in the case of Armenians. There have been considerably fewer instances of manifestation of selflessness in rescuing the lives of Armenians. Those “saved” were, as a rule, either suggested to have adopted Islam, or, in case of women and girls, to marry their “saviors”, or were exploited as additional labor hands and used otherwise, mostly with motives of self-interest. Still, as they say, “a negative answer is nevertheless an answer.” In any case, such a study would be of great help for a more accurate evaluation of the ethnic factor in the occurrences of the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as well as for the interpretation of genocide memory and the elucidation of a number of issues related to the construction of Armenian-Turkish relations.

## **Victim or Fighter?**

The presence of the genocide memory has significance in the Armenian system of perceptions and culture, as well as in its interaction with the rest of the world. Just as other peoples of the world do not reject the “burden” of their past, which is part of their identity, Armenians cannot abandon the legacy of the memory of their difficult past. Moreover, it is typical to have numerous international parallels, which is far from being detrimental.

This emphasis is conditioned by the recent development of a growing belief among some layers of the Armenian society, mostly the youth, that enough has already been said concerning the genocide: it distorts the psychology of our children and youth, and contributes to increasing xenophobia, etc.

An important aspect of this issue is the fact that when speaking of the Genocide, emphasis on the mass extermination of Armenians in Armenian-inhabited areas of the Ottoman Empire, the inhumane sufferings of deported Armenians in the deserts of Deir-Zor, and the fact of the helplessness of people doomed to be gradually annihilated can hardly be avoided. Due to this emphasis, certain members of society believe that the Armenians

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17. See for details, for example: <http://www1.yadvashem.org/yv/en/righteous/about.asp>, <http://www1.yadvashem.org/yv/en/righteous/statistics.asp>



were slaughtered like sheep, while showing almost no resistance. Such a representation and the equivalent perception of the fact of Genocide and the build-up of the national identity on that basis was largely contributed to by the works of talented Armenian writers in the Soviet period (especially the period from the end of the 1950s and the 1960s) on the theme of the Genocide. Such writers include Paruyr Sevak, Hovhannes Shiraz, Silva Kaputikyan, Gevorg Emin and Hrachya Kochar who have produced some of the best-loved classics of several generations. However, an important circumstance has been overlooked. In fact, the Soviet leadership, particularly from the second half of the 1950s, did not so much forbid discussion of the Genocide, as it did foster the retention of memories in which Armenians were exclusively presented as innocent victims who had lost the greater part of their historical homeland and therefore needed sympathy.

Likewise, in Armenian historiography, emphasis was placed on descriptions of the Genocide and on collecting related documents, on verifying the number of victims, criticizing the Turkish policy of denial, and, later, on highlighting heroically fought battles. It is true that Armenian historians have highlighted and are continuing to write about the well-known self-defense battles at Van, Shatakh, Shapin-Garahisar, Musa Ler, Hajen, Urfa and other places. Still a very important circumstance is being left out in this matter: nothing is said from the perspective of historiographic evaluation about the fact that in both large and small villages, Armenians put up resistance, whether for a day or two, or a week or two, and that in one Armenian settlements or another, families fought deadly battles against the enemy, even if these battles only lasted for a couple of hours. Once again, note that such episodes have been described as separate facts/microhistories, yet, there have been no attempts of generalization or of presenting them as a qualitative phenomenon. In many instances (which is measurable) Armenians did not docilely wait to be slaughtered. It is difficult to explain the reasons why the issue is not analyzed from this standpoint. Among other things, not least important is the fact that for decades *only historians*, for whom “facts” are often identified with “documents,” have engaged in the study of the genocide issues, whereas most of the materials referred to in this study do not belong to that category.

The situation has not much changed in recent years. Thus, when April arrives, the Armenian mass media abounds with the theme of sadness: the innumerable innocent victims are remembered as well as the lost historical homeland, etc. The situation changes radically with the arrival of May, a month that is rightfully considered “a month of victories,” probably because of the Battle of Avarayr (451), the Battle of Sardarapat (1918), the victory in the Great Patriotic War (1945) and the liberation of Shushi in the more recent past (1992). The list of the official holidays does not include the heroic struggle of Van and its victory (1915). The struggle had begun in April (April 7) and was over in May (May 3), having lasted only 27 days, yet resulted in the saving of at least 200 thousand lives of the people of Van-Vasporakan. If the Armenian Parliament adopted April 7 (or April 19 according to the new style) as Self-Defense Day (even if leaving it a working day), the grave symbol of April as a month of mourning could be gradually changed, or at least be an aid in renaming “a month of struggle and remembrance.”

In the case of Jews, instances of armed resistance in the years of Holocaust had been relatively fewer, or, to be more accurate, *different by nature* (participation in the underground and thus in the Resistance; in the guerrilla movement; resistance in concentration camps,

etc), yet the Holocaust historians consistently pay much attention to this theme and, in particular, to the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising (April-May, 1943). Note that the fact that the Holocaust Commemoration Day in Israel is officially called “Holocaust and Heroism Remembrance Day” or “Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Day,” the museum – “Yad Vashem: The Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Authority” has been conditioned, among other factors, by this as well. The researchers engaged in the study of the history of Holocaust see the solution of the problem in extending the boundaries of the issue and naming it the “Jewish response” or giving other similar definitions. In this case numerous instances of *moral resistance* come to the foreground, which at least shakes the decades-old stereotype that the Jews had been “slaughtered like sheep” – a definition that, as noted above, emerging in some circles of present-day Armenian society, leads to manifestations of an inferiority complex, to instances of the perception of the memory of genocide as a burden, and to a recognition of the need for action towards discarding it.

The stereotype “slaughtered like sheep” long persisted among the Jews as well. The fact that the attitude towards the survivors of the Holocaust used to be quite different in the first two decades after the calamity is largely conditioned by this fact. It is a fact that the formation of the state of Israel was accompanied by large and small scale wars, which means that the Jews, unlike in Holocaust years, fought with weapons against the enemy. They were warriors and fighters, and it was considered that the image of a survivor of Nazi horrors would do nothing to inspire them. Only with the passage of time this attitude started to change gradually and the recognition of the stories of the survivors and their experiences became a social requirement.

## **The Forty Days of Musa-Dagh and Jewish Resistance**

It is characteristic that in the Jewish ghettos (including those in Warsaw) and in the underground that showed resistance to Nazism or sought to do so, Franz Werfel’s novel, “The Forty Days of Musa Dagh,” was widely read. This novel, according to the eyewitnesses, inspired those who struggled against unequal forces, making them confident of their own strength. As Yair Auron, one who has studied the issue meticulously, notes,<sup>18</sup> Musa Dagh has often been compared to the resistance in the Jewish ghettos during the World War II.<sup>19</sup> The Jewish underground organizations which operated in the ghettos during the Nazi occupation of Europe, intensely debated the purpose of their struggle and the meaning of their lives and death in their harsh reality.<sup>20</sup> Several records from their shocking and fascinating discussions, highlighting moral and existential Jewish dilemmas, were found. One of these is the minutes of a general meeting of Kibbutz “Tel Hai,” a group of Jewish activist youth

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18. See for details: Yair Auron, *The Banality of Indifference: Zionism and the Armenian Genocide* (New Brunswick (USA) and London (UK): Transaction Publishers, 2000), 293–311. See also: Hans Wagener, *Understanding Franz Werfel* (Columbia, South Carolina: South Carolina University Press, 1993), 115–124; Yair Auron, “The Impact of Jewish Youth in Palestine and Europe,” in *Remembrance and Denial: The Case of the Armenian Genocide*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999), 147–164.

19. Yair Auron, *The Banality of Indifference*, p. 293.

20. Ibid, p. 301.



in Bialystock (northeast Poland), on February 27, 1943. During the discussion, one of the central figures of the organization, Herschel Rosenthal, suggested viewing the ghetto as “our Musa-Dagh,” and so adding “a chapter of honor to the history of Jewish Bialystock and of our movement.”<sup>21</sup> In May 25, 1943 commander of the Bialystock underground Mordechai Tenebaum wrote: “Musa-dagh is all the rage with us. If you read it [“The Forty Days of Musa Dagh”], you will remember it for the rest of your life.”<sup>22</sup> According to Chayka Grossman, one of the leading figures in the leadership of Socialist-Zionist youth movement in Bialystock, copies of the book had been “passed from hand to hand” among the ghetto’s defenders, who compared their situation to that of the Armenians.<sup>23</sup> The same appreciation of this book appeared in the Sosnovitz (southern Poland), Kovno (Kaunas, Lithuania), and Warsaw ghettos youth. Another Jewish researcher recalled the impact of Musa Dagh on Yitzhak Zuckerman (Antek), who was one of the leaders of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. In his journal, the chronicler of the Warsaw Ghetto, Emmanuel Ringelblum, compared the situation in the ghetto with that of Musa Dagh.<sup>24</sup>

The book was also influential in the Western European underground. Members of the Dutch underground read the book in German. “It was a ‘textbook’ for us,” one of them wrote, “it opened our eyes and spelled out for us what might happen, although we did not know what in fact would occur.”<sup>25</sup>

The examples cited above indicate the importance and significance that Jewish youth movements attributed to “The Forty Days of Musa Dagh,” probably before the World War II and certainly during it. The book was an example, a reference, and, to some extent, a model to be admired and imitated.

In a publication on the life of the Jewish ghettos in the Nazi years, it is stated that<sup>26</sup> during the Second World War the most widely read books among adults were “The Forty Days of Musa Dagh” and “War and Peace” by Leo Tolstoy. As Yair Auron indicates, it seems that the magnetism of Musa Dagh which became a symbol for the Jewish underground’s resistance fighters resulted from the powerful text. During the period of the ghetto, the reality of the ultimate victim became clearer and clearer, at least to the members of the underground. There was, nonetheless, a notion of dignity and self-respect; an admiration for the victim who struggles, rebels, strives for freedom, and maintains his dignity even after his fate is doomed. Even the dilemma so widely posed in the context of the Holocaust – “going like sheep to slaughter” – appears numerous times in “The Forty Days of Musa Dagh,” where the characters state that they have no wish to die in this manner. In this sense the reading of the book fortified the spirit of its readers, future underground fighters, as Mordechai Tenebaum and other underground leaders have suggested.

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21. Ibid, p. 302.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid, p. 306:

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid. The author states that (p. 311) he found the information in: David Shavit, *Hunger for the Printed World: Books and Libraries in the Jewish Ghettos of Nazi-Occupied Europe* (Jefferson, North Carolina (USA), and London: McFarland & Co., Publishers, 1997).

Let me emphasize once again: for the members of the Jewish underground the story of the defense of Musa Dagh was a parable, a model and a source of inspiration. They equated their own fate to that of Armenians. In both cases, the persecutor's purpose was the uprooting, the exile, and the physical annihilation of entire communities, and in both cases, resistance embodied the idea of an honorable death as a nation, or a chance to be saved as individuals.

## **Global Response and State Formation**

The evaluation of the forms of the world's response to the Jewish and Armenian genocides is closely linked with the Armenian identity and with certain elements of the system of Armenian perceptions. Now then, has the world's attitude always been indifferent to Armenians? Armenians have commonly maintained the perception that the Great Powers have usually sacrificed the interests of the Armenian people at their convenience, have denied help in the time of need, etc, in order to achieve their own goals and serve their own interests. I believe that this is a rather typical example, not in relation to Armenians only, but to many other nations of the world, of an approach taken when a society due to objective or subjective, or both objective and subjective reasons is unable to solve a certain problem unassisted, seeks to put the blame for its failures on someone from outside. Thus, even before the end of World War I, Eastern Armenians managed to proclaim the creation of the Republic of Armenia. Only a week later, the Batumi Treaty was signed with the state responsible for the Armenian Genocide, which significantly narrowed down the yet not clearly outlined boundaries of the Armenian state. Thanks to the victory of the Allied States, by the end of the war, the boundaries of the new founded Armenian state significantly expanded by the inclusion of the Kars region and other territories without any military action. On August 10, 1920 the Entente Powers and the Ottoman Empire signed the Treaty of Sevres, which claimed that the territory of Armenia was to be trebled. Yet Armenia was unable to repulse the recurrent attack of the Turks not long after the signing of the Treaty; the internal unrest played its role too. The fact remains that thanks to the assistance of the Great Powers, Armenia received the opportunity to become a *de jure*, powerful Middle Eastern state, whereas it failed to become *de facto*.

The course of events was different in the case of the Jewish people. Along with the spread of Zionist ideology, "Aliyah," the repatriation of Jews towards Palestinian territories began under the mandate of the Ottoman Empire and later of Great Britain yet populated predominantly by Arabs. In the years preceding the formation of the state, the population of the Jewish community of the area had reached 650 thousand people. The world at large did not particularly assist this repatriation: there were quotas fixed by the authorities of the British mandate which were regularly breached not as much with the connivance of the British, as by the mass nature of illegal immigration. The immigration was organized mainly by the effort of the Jews. Afterwards, the world, in response to the loss of the Jews and their persistence, allowed, by the UN decree, the creation of a Jewish state. Right after the proclamation of the state of Israel, in May, 1948, wars began with the neighboring Arab states. The newly created state withstood and even more – expanded its territory. In short, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Jews succeeded in singlehandedly establishing a more or less *de facto* (a mass presence in the Palestine) status, which was followed with some assistance by

the Great Powers to establish a *de jure* status, creating a small, yet nonetheless powerful, Middle Eastern state.

So, in both the cases of the Armenians and Jews, the “world” has been both indifferent and compassionate. Still, the outcomes remain to be different.

## **Crimes against Humanity**

After the defeat of Nazi Germany, the Allies organized an international court-martial for the chief Nazi war criminals that lasted for about nine months. The highest-ranking military officers and statesmen of Nazi Germany were called to answer. The Nuremberg trial unmasked the essence of German fascism, its plans for the annihilation of whole countries and peoples, and the hazard of fascism to mankind.

It is known from history that Pan-Turkism, too, pursued the extermination of whole countries and peoples. Similar to fascism, millions of people, mostly Armenians, fell victim to this ideology. As previously promised by the Allied states, the Pan-Turkist Young Turk leaders were tried after World War I, although the trial never saw a conclusion because of the inconsistency of the Allies themselves. As it later became apparent, the Allies did not wish to risk their future relations with the Turks, and had no intention of punishing the “Turk criminal.”<sup>27</sup> Moreover, they took them under protection.

And what happened next? In the words of Simon Vratsian, the last Prime Minister of the First Republic of Armenia:

A quarter of a century later, after World War II, in conditions very much the same, an international court-martial was held in Nuremberg for Nazi criminals. The Nazi leaders were executed and the German people were made to pay an indemnity to Jews, to calm the indignant conscience of the ‘civilized humanity.’ Different was the attitude of that same ‘civilized humanity’ with regard to Armenians. One half of the Armenian population of Turkey had been massacred in a most vicious way, the other half had been scattered all over the world. The property of Armenians was stolen. Towns and villages were deserted. And when the time arrived for indemnity, the ‘civilized humanity’ remained unconcerned. The Armenians organized, with the “sacred blood of their sons”...their own Armenian Nuremberg for the Turk butchers. [the emphasis is mine—H.M.]<sup>28</sup>

With the efforts of the Armenian political party, “Armenian Revolutionary Federation,” the “Nemesis” action was planned, and many of the organizers of the Armenian Genocide were assassinated by Armenian avengers. In the case of Jews too, despite the Nuremberg trial, right after the war in 1945, a number of groupings of Jewish avengers came to assassinate about 1500 or more SS officers and officials of various levels directly engaged in the actions for the annihilation of Jews.<sup>29</sup> So, it can be stated that the response of the Armenians and the Jews with respect to *vengeance* has been identical.

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27. S[imon] V[ratsian], “The Armenian Nuremberg,” in Arshavir Shirakian, *Ktakn er nahataknerun* [It was the Will of the Martyrs] (Yerevan: Adana, 1991), 75.

28. Ibid, pp. 76–77:

29. See for details: Morris Beckman, *The Jewish Brigade: An Army with Two Masters 1944–1945* (Staplehurst, Kent: Spellmount, 1998).

## **The Americanization of Genocide**

In the monograph devoted to the creation of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), its author Edward T. Linenthal, used the following idea in his first sentence: “the Holocaust became an event officially incorporated into American memory.”<sup>30</sup> The idea appears elsewhere in the book, when both positive and negative aspects of the “Americanization of Holocaust” are considered.<sup>31</sup> As Linenthal notes when assessing the appointment of a Commission on the Holocaust in 1978 by President Carter, “he signaled that the Holocaust had moved not only from the periphery to the center of American Jewish consciousness, but to the center of national consciousness as well. Too important a story to be bounded by ethnic memory, it was, by virtue of its awesome impact, its poisonous legacy, and its supposed valuable “lessons,” worthy of inclusion in the official canon that shaped Americans’ sense of themselves.”<sup>32</sup> On another page he notes that “The Report [created by the President’s Commission on Holocaust] insisted on the Jewish core of the Holocaust. The event, it insisted, “is essentially Jewish, yet its interpretation is universal.”<sup>33</sup> On yet another page, he presents the deputy director of the above mentioned Commission Michael Berenbaum’s opinion that “The story [of Holocaust] would, however, have to be told in a way that would be meaningful to an American audience; it would have to move beyond the boundaries of ethnic memory.”<sup>34</sup> As a progress indicator of the phenomenon of “Americanization of Holocaust,” Linenthal presents well known Holocaust scholar Raul Hilberg’s opinion on the reason for the growing interest of university students in the US in courses on the Holocaust: “After the disorientation of Vietnam, they [Americans] wanted to know the difference between good and evil. The Holocaust is the benchmark, the defining moment in the drama of good and evil.”<sup>35</sup> The course taken by the Commission for the foundation of the Holocaust Memorial, even though criticized “in some segments of the American Jewish community,”<sup>36</sup> was nevertheless the only right one.

During my interview with the coordinator of the Armenian Genocide Museum of America, Dr. Rouben Adalian, I understood that the same approach was adopted by that museum.<sup>37</sup> This approach was influenced by close observation of the foundation of the USHMM, and talks with Linenthal, as well as the understanding of Linenthal’s book. Yet, if, in case of Holocaust, evil was punished in the highest international courts, and if many the perpetrators admitted their crime and have repented, the situation is very much different in the case of the Armenians. To this day, the international community has not

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30. Edward T. Linenthal, *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America’s Holocaust Museum* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 1.

31. Ibid, pp. 44, 216 etc. This phenomenon has been widely considered in many other works on Holocaust memory.

32. Ibid, pp. 12-13.

33. Ibid, p. 36.

34. Ibid, pp. 44-45.

35. Ibid, p. 11.

36. Ibid, p. 13.

37. H. Marutyan’s personal archive, recordings.

legally condemned the Armenian Genocide; Turkey refuses to acknowledge its factuality, insisting that it is a mere fabrication. And, there is no word of compensation on the part of the legal successors of the Ottoman Empire. In other words, evil has not been punished, and from this aspect, Armenians have yet a long way to go. For this reason, the Armenian Genocide Museum in the United States will have to widely display the facts of genocides that occurred in the world during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, show how a rich historical-cultural heritage created over centuries was largely obliterated, and make future generations aware of the assistance of the American people to Armenians during and after the Genocide, and thus to make an attempt to link the history of the Armenian Genocide to 20<sup>th</sup> century United States history.<sup>38</sup>

In both cases one can see an effort to take purely ethnic tragedies that were ethnic by nature, beyond the boundaries of ethnicity, and to present them to the world as “evil of international level.” At least in case with USHMM, which has been functioning for 20 years already and has been visited by more than 37 million people, we are faced with facts that show what happens when basic American values are trampled. In particular, this direct link is evident in two inscriptions at the entrance to the museum, one of which is a quotation from George Washington, which reads: “The government of the United States... gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance.”<sup>39</sup> Another indication of such an attempt can be considered the recognition by the General Assembly of the United Nations in October, 2006, of January 27 (the day of liberation, in 1945, of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the biggest Nazi concentration camp) as the Annual International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust. So, in addition to the Holocaust Remembrance Day, *Yom Hashoah*, observed in Israel and in countries with Jewish communities on the 27<sup>th</sup> day of the Jewish month of Nisan, now another day is officially added to be observed by the international community. Thus the memory of the Holocaust is now officially accepted as an important part of the international memory of struggle against evil. So, when Armenian scholars and publicists, or ordinary people, compare the Armenian Genocide with the Jewish Holocaust, it is not only and not so much a wish to state a historical fact as a wish to make the Armenian Genocide part of international memory. One manifestation of this intention is the use of Holocaust-related terminology in publications on the Armenian Genocide in English (*concentration camp*, *Armenian Nuremberg* etc). This is also how I am inclined to interpret the following excerpt from Linenthal’s book: “Each group [Polish, Armenians, Romani] argued that they belonged within the boundaries of the Holocaust, and then their representatives made a case for their “space,” their position – always defined, however, in relation to the Jewish center.”<sup>40</sup>

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38. See for details, for example: Rouben Adalian, compiler and editor, *Guide to the Armenian Genocide in the U.S. Archives 1915–1918* (Alexandria, VA and Cambridge, UK, 1994); Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America’s Response* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003); Jay Winter, ed., *America and the Armenian Genocide of 1915* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

39. [http://www.ushmm.org/research/library/faq/details.php?lang=en&topic=06#quote\\_washington](http://www.ushmm.org/research/library/faq/details.php?lang=en&topic=06#quote_washington)

40. Edward T. Linenthal, op. cit., p. 249.

In the process of becoming part of American memory, Armenians are trying to follow the example of the Jews. In particular, in a number of U.S. States, April 24 has been declared as Commemoration day of the victims of the Armenian Genocide, and forty-three states have officially recognized the Armenian Genocide.<sup>41</sup> Still, it is not yet officially included in the American calendar. The issue of creating an Armenian Genocide Museum in Washington pursues the same objective. Note that when choosing the site for the museum, the American Armenians were comparing its location to that of the USHMM, which is openly implied in, for example, the “Armenian Genocide Museum of America” video clip.<sup>42</sup>

The Holocaust scholars have in their declarations repeatedly defined the occurrences of the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as genocide.<sup>43</sup> By contrast, in some cases Jewish lobbyists have opposed the efforts of Armenians to present the fact of Genocide to the American public.<sup>44</sup> Among such recent instances were the activities of Anti-Defamation League (ADL), which aimed its efforts at denying the mass murder of the Armenians to be constituted as genocide.<sup>45</sup> Linenthal considers the issue of inclusion of the Armenian Genocide in USHMM in detail. He points out the purely political reasons underlying the results, among them theses of the notion of the “uniqueness of the Holocaust” and the pressure of the Turks.<sup>46</sup> In consequence, the Armenians at present are mentioned in USHMM only in the quotation attributed to Adolf Hitler, and the Armenian Genocide is mentioned but a couple of times in expert texts broadcast through monitors at Wexner Center. From September 27 till November 12, 2000, in the least visited part of the museum, in an inconspicuous corner in front of the Meyerhoff Theatre, a rather large screen titled “The Armenian Genocide” displayed pictures, maps, and texts on the issue. Note that rather primitive texts accompanied this temporary display:<sup>47</sup> apart from the title, the word “genocide” occurs not once, and there are no parallels made with the Holocaust. On August 25, 2009, the series “Voice of America Press Releases and Documents,” presented extracts from an interview with Bridget Conley-Zilkic, project director of the USHMM’s Committee on Conscience, in which a paragraph marked “Armenians in World War I” bore a line that reads: “Armenia is a controversial case

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41. See, for example: “Genocide Awareness Act” Clears California State Senate. <http://www.asbarez.com/2009/06/04/genocide-awareness-act-clears-california-state-senate/>; Rouben Adalian, “President Obama’s Statement on the Armenian Genocide,” p. 13.

42. See the introductory video about the Armenian Genocide Museum of America, <http://www.armeniangenocidemuseum.org/>

43. See, for example: “Statement by 126 Holocaust Scholars, Holders of Academic Chairs, and Directors of Holocaust Research and Studies Centers. March 7, 2000,” *New York Times*, June 9, 2000, <http://www.genocide-museum.am/eng/126.php>

44. See, for example: Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1999), 192–193.

45. See for details: David Boyagian, “Confronting the Denialist Jewish Lobby: Mission Accomplished?” *The Armenian Weekly*, April 1, 2009.

46. See for details: Edward T. Linenthal, op. cit., pp. 228–239, Peter Novick, op. cit., pp. 192–193.

47. The document titled “Script Final. pdf” and the photograph were kindly given us by Edward Phillips, editor of “*Genocide Prevention e-Newsletter*” at USHMM, at the request of Steven Feldman.



today...,” “There is a lot at stake in being able to say that genocide happened.”<sup>48</sup> Such an attitude has its grounds: a museum is an official establishment and is obliged to demonstrate the operating doctrines of U.S. policy in its official information. Despite this official US policy, there is not one researcher in all the research departments of the museum who would question the fact of the Armenian Genocide. Articles on the topic are regularly published in the academic periodical of the museum, “Holocaust and Genocide studies.”

## **The Architecture of Genocide Memory**

Naturally, the “physical container” of the Holocaust memory, considered as an important part of American memory, couldn’t have been situated in an ordinary location. On page two of Linenthal’s book is written, that: “The dedication of a museum located adjacent to the ceremonial center of the nation, the Washington Mall, emphasized the Holocaust’s place in the official memory of the nation.”<sup>49</sup> Further on in the book, the author dwells in detail on the issues of place and site selection for the construction of the museum. Some characteristic quotes are: thus, the members of the President’s Commission were of the opinion that “since this was to be a ‘national’ memorial, Washington, D.C., was the proper location.” Or “A museum built in New York, even if national in intent, would clearly be perceived as a Jewish museum built in the heart of the Jewish community in America. Memory of the Holocaust would remain the province of American Jews. A national museum in Washington, on the other hand, made a more expansive – and controversial – claim on memory.” Or “What was more attractive, of course, was the site’s location. Not only would there be a national museum to the Holocaust in the nation’s capital, but, by virtue of its location just off the Mall, the museum would gain the prestige of a *central* national memorial.” Or “For survivors, a museum within the monumental core was especially important. It was the logical extension of their desire and need to make Holocaust memory permanent” and “A museum at the heart of American commemorative space was viewed as an eternal insurance policy.”<sup>50</sup> As has been stated above, the AGMA will be located, if not on the Washington Mall perceived as the “ceremonial center of the nation,” still on a site no less significant – only a couple of blocks, a few minutes’ walk from the White House.

How, then, was the problem solved not abroad, in the Diaspora, but in the countries that stand for the sovereignty of the two peoples, the Jews and the Armenians, who have suffered genocide – in Israel and in the Republic of Armenia? Note that the territory of RA has not been part of the territory shown in maps in circulation for several decades, of the places where genocide was perpetrated. Similarly, nor was the Holocaust perpetrated in Israel.<sup>51</sup>

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48. When Can It Be Considered Genocide and Why It Matters. 1049 words. 25 August 2009. Voice of America Press Releases and Documents. CY Copyright (c) 2009 Federal Information & News Dispatch, Inc. VOA English Service. Document VOA0000020090825e58p00037.

49. Edward T. Linenthal, op. cit., p. 2.

50. Ibid, pp. 57, 58, 59, 61, 63-72, 256.

51. Issues relating to the domain of studies of the Armenian Genocide memory that face the sociopolitical and academic thought of the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are not limited to the above. Other domains



Drawing parallels between the Genocide Memorial in Armenia and Yad Vashem in Israel is a matter of elaborate study. Here are some parallels: in Armenia, the wooded hill of Tsitsernakaberd was selected as a location for the construction of the Memorial Complex for the Victims of the Genocide. It was rather far, about an hour walk from the center of the capital. It is perceived as a cemetery, and the annual marches to the Memorial combine collective memory and burial rituals to become a particular manifestation of national identity.<sup>52</sup> Mount Herzl, on the western slope of which Yad Vashem is located, is considered a national cemetery, where Jewish and Israeli national and public figures, as well as the fallen soldiers of the Israel Defense Forces are buried. Though Tzitzernakaberd is currently not a cemetery, it was during the Bronze Age (burial sites were found here in 1920s), and the part of the Complex showcasing the eternal fire has been designed as a crypt. It was due to this perception of the place as cemetery, too, that in 1991 some of the victims of the armed conflicts on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border were buried in the immediate vicinity of the Genocide Monument. The authorities, however, brought this practice to a halt. There is usually a chapel in or beside any Armenian cemetery. There is no chapel in the area of the Genocide Memorial complex. This “omission” seems to have been noted by the Church. On April 24, 2005 the Holy See of Echmiadzin placed a stone slab near the Monument, with an inscription stating that a chapel would be built there in the memory of the martyrs.<sup>53</sup> There is a synagogue on the territory of Yad Vashem too. Though there is no structure intended for religious rites in USHMM, architecturally spiritual feelings impression is created by the Hall of Remembrance. In the Tzitzernakaberd museum, the religious element is manifested by its cross-like windows.

In the Armenian language, one of the synonyms for “cemetery” is the term “resting-place.”<sup>54</sup> It is considered important not to disturb the dead by locating places of worldly entertainment nearby. When in the mid-1980s the construction of a Sports and Concert Complex on the slope of Tsitsernakaberd hill was proposed, there was huge public opposition to the plan and its actual construction, which was considered sacrilegious. Critical remarks about a restaurant being located on the approaches of the Armenian Genocide Memorial can still be heard. There are several eateries functioning on the territory of the Memorial complex

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for comparison between the Armenian and Jewish genocides are: the boundaries of “Genocide victim” concept in Armenian and Jewish cases; ways of “individualization” of the Holocaust; questions as to the survivors’ telling what they have experienced; forms of pilgrimage to the “places of remembrance”; the specifics of memory preservation in homeland and diaspora; the forms of memory preserving (archives, museums, educational institutions); and the emphasises, the similarities and differences in the culture of memorialization; the ways of memory awakening and transforming it to a factor; the potential of Genocide/Holocaust memory; interrelation between memory and indemnification, etc.

52. See for details: Harutyun Marutyan, *Iconography of Armenian Identity*, 40-46.

53. It is of interest that the architect of the Armenian Genocide Memorial Mr. Sashur Kalashyan wrote an “open letter” (May 10, 2005) where he was categorically against the idea. Probably his architect’s professional instinct told him that in that case the Memorial would completely acquire cemetery functions. His criticism was taken into consideration, but only partially: a chapel will be built on the territory of the complex, but farther from the Memorial itself than was originally planned.

54. See: St. Malkhasyants, *Dictionary of Armenian Language*, vol. III (Yerevan: State Press of Armenian SSR, 1944), 45.

that have opened in the years after the declaration of independence.<sup>55</sup> There is an opinion, that Tzitzernakaberd was deliberately chosen for the Sports and Concert Complex, in order to de-sanctify the territory.<sup>56</sup>

Each year on April 24 about one million people visit the Genocide Memorial Complex to pay tribute to the martyrs. In the years of the Karabagh Movement in 1988-1990, this pilgrimage often grew into political demonstrations with countless posters, banners and wreaths bearing political messages. An analysis of the posters seen at the Memorial clearly shows how the image of a victim pleading for justice was gradually replaced by that of a warrior who had realized that national objectives could be achieved through struggle only.<sup>57</sup> Today, the Genocide Memorial Complex is Armenia's single venue in which all various political, economic, and non-governmental organizations have the opportunity to "mark their presence" once a year.

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55. See for details: R. Arshakyan, "The "Bear-pit" Spreads its wings," *Aravot*, September 2, 2004N. Babayan, "Mourning and Carousing Side by side," *Aravot*, October 26, 2007; J. Hakobyan, "Cultural Conflict: Construction on the Territory of the Genocide Memorial Gives Rise to People's Discontent," [http://www.armenianow.com/hy/features/7805/cultural\\_clash\\_development\\_of\\_genoc](http://www.armenianow.com/hy/features/7805/cultural_clash_development_of_genoc), October 2, 2007;

56. The opinions were voiced in the discussions at the international conference, "From Memory to Remembrance," on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tzitzernakaberd Genocide Memorial Complex (Yerevan, November 27-28, 2007) where I was present too.

57. See for details: Harutyun Marutyan, op. cit., p. 277.

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# **SORROW IS TURNED TO JOY: A PLAY ABOUT THE 1909 ADANA MASSACRES, STAGED BY ARMENIAN GENOCIDE SURVIVORS IN GREECE'**

Matthias Bjørnlund & Iben Hendel Philipsen

*Abstract: In April 1924, a group of Armenian women genocide survivors in the care of a Danish missionary organization in Thessaloniki staged a play; Sorrow is Turned to Joy, based on the 1909 Adana massacres. The article briefly explores the framework and context of the missionary organization, the actors, and the theatrical performance, followed by a translation of the entire play from Danish into English.*

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## **Background**

The year was 1924. In the Greek city of Thessaloniki (Salonica), the small Danish Evangelical missionary organization *Industrimissionen i Armenien* (The Industrial Mission in Armenia; IM) had established workshops, homes, and educational facilities for Armenian genocide survivors, mainly widows, young women, and children, from their base in the Papafi quarter. The organization was founded in Denmark in the autumn of 1921 under the motto of “*Hjælp til Selvhjælp*” (“Help to Self-Help”), and their first mission field was in Greek-controlled Rodosto (Tekirdag), a city overflowing with tens of thousands of destitute Christian refugees from Asia Minor. According to the memoirs of one of the IM missionaries, Margrethe Jepsen, on their arrival in the spring of 1922, the shores at Rodosto were filled with dead and dying people, mostly women and children, often half-naked and abused, sometimes pregnant from rape and tattooed by the perpetrators.<sup>2</sup> However, like most other non-Turks and non-Muslims, the IM staff and the Armenians in their care had to relocate head over heels (albeit under the formal protection of British, French, and Italian troops in the region) after only a few months as Kemalist forces took over Eastern Thrace and the city.<sup>3</sup>

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2. Axel Gram, *Blandt Armeniske Flygtninge i Grækenland. Med Erindringer af den Tidligere Armeniermissionær Margrethe Jepsen*, (Industrimissionen i Grækenland (Dansk Armeniermission i Grækenland), 1953), 13, 17-18. See also *Industrimissionens Blad* 1 4 (December 1922): 49; “City a Mass of Wreckage,” *New York Times*, 15 September 1922; H. L. Larsen, *Et Folk i Nød: Træk af Armeniernes Trængsler* (Aarhus: Industrimissionen i Armenien, 1933), 58; *The Orient*, 9 10 (October 1922): 93-94. On the tattoo issue, see, e.g., the documentary by Suzanne Khardalian, *Grandma's Tattoos* (Sweden 2011); The Past under Our Skin, “A very wild publication: The slave market news”, <https://thepastunderourskin.wordpress.com/>

3. On the evacuation of Rodosto and the accompanying atrocities, see, e.g., Lysimachos Oeconomos, *The*

Now, two years later, the Industrial Mission was but one of many missionary and relief organizations, from the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and the Near East Relief (NER) to the High Commissioner of Refugees of the League of Nations, working in Thessaloniki. Like Rodosto, it was a city overflowing with poor, miserable Greek and Armenian refugees from what had now become the Turkish Republic; in addition, it was a city plagued by diseases, including malaria, and it was still partly in ruins after the Balkan Wars and the Great Fire of 1917. To complicate matters further, the local and national authorities had become significantly less welcoming toward the Armenian refugees as Greece was now being flooded with more than one million Greek refugees from Turkey as a result of the League of Nations-orchestrated “population exchange” headed by the Norwegian League commissioner Fridtjof Nansen. As a result, organizations like IM, desperate to find a long-term solution to the problem, came up with more or less realistic ideas about what to do, such as large-scale migration of Armenians to regions and countries like Greek Macedonia, Brazil, Syria, Canada, the Soviet Armenian Republic, and Egypt. Some Armenians supported these ideas, as they feared the last remnants of the nation would disappear, should they be split into small groups all over Greece, while the Greek authorities, on the other hand, generally opposed such ideas as they did not welcome the prospect of larger concentrations of non-Greek populations within their country.<sup>4</sup>

Quite a few of the Western missionaries and relief workers in Thessaloniki and elsewhere in Greece were veterans with experience from working in the Ottoman Empire before and during the Armenian genocide, including the ABCFM missionaries Ruth Parmelee, Bertha Morley, and George E. White, Alma Johansson from the Swedish branch of *Kvindelige Missions Arbejdere* (Women Missionary Workers; KMA), Wilhelmine Grünhagen from the Danish branch of KMA, and Anna Jensen and Jensine Ørtz (Jensine Oerts Peters) from IM, former members of the German missionary organization *Deutsche Hilfsbund* and Danish

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*Tragedy of the Christian Near East*, (London: Anglo-Hellenic League, 1923), 15ff; Ernest Hemingway, “Refugees from Thrace,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 22 November 1922; in Ernest Hemingway, *By-Line Ernest Hemingway: Selected Articles and Dispatches of Four Decades*, ed. William White (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002); “Rodosto Handed Over to Kemalists,” *The West Australian*, 15 November 1922; “Greek Soldiers Mutiny, Many Desertions from Troops at Rodosto Also Reported,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 6 August 1922; “Evacuation of Thrace to be Started Soon. Greeks Will Leave in 3 Stages, a 5-Day Period for Each Being Allowed,” *Cornell Daily Sun*, October 16, 1922; “Allied Troops Patrol Thrace” *The Hutchinson News*, 3 November 1922; “Greek Forces Begin Evacuating Thrace” *New York Times*, 16 October 1922; Panayiotis Diamadis, “Australian Responses to Hellenic Genocide in 1910-1930s with Additional References to Responses to the Assyrian Genocide and to the Shoah,” *Genocide Prevention Now* 11 (2012).

4. *Industrimissionens Blad* 211, 12, 13, 14 (1924): 158, 190-91, 206-07, 237-38; Isabel Kaprielian-Churchill, “Armenian Refugees and Their Entry into Canada, 1919-1930,” *Canadian Historical Review* 71 1 (1990): 90-91. For early U.S. relief efforts in Thessaloniki, Constantinople, etc., see, e.g., Suda Lorena Bane & Ralph Haswell Lutz, *Organization of American Relief in Europe, 1918-1919: Including Negotiations Leading Up to the Establishment of the Office of Director General of Relief at Paris by the Allied and Associated Powers* (Stanford University Press, 1943), 214ff.

KMA, respectively.<sup>5</sup> Parmelee and Morley still worked for ABCFM,<sup>6</sup> while Ørtz, who worked as missionary and relief worker in Malatia (Malatya) in the Ottoman Mamouret-ul-Aziz (Harput/Kharput) province until 1914, founded IM in 1921, as she was unable to continue her work in the field for KMA.<sup>7</sup> Many of these individuals and organizations worked together in the face of this massive humanitarian crisis; the Industrial Mission, for instance, cooperated with the Greek Red Cross and the League of Nations, and they received financial as well as material aid from KMA, the Greek government, and private donors like the Danish count Frederik Holstein.<sup>8</sup>

Aside from Jensine Ørtz, Margrethe Jepsen, Anna Jensen, and the missionary couple Andreas and Karen Hansen, during the early years, the IM staff also included a number of Armenians, among them the teachers Nevart, Takuhi Minasian, and Baron Hagop as well as the Protestant pastor (*Badveli*) Sarkis Kisilian (Kizilian; Keselian). Furthermore, the organization cooperated with local Protestant and Apostolic (Gregorian) Armenian leaders. The IM facilities were modest, usually located in cheap, functional barracks or tents in various quarters and refugee camps in and around Thessaloniki, including the Venizelos Camp, Tomba, Adabassartar, Kalamaria, and Tiniki Mahali (Tin Town; Tin Neighborhood), where large empty kerosene tin cans had been flattened and used as walls and roofs for makeshift houses for homeless Christian refugees from Turkey.<sup>9</sup> The Industrial Mission's activities included micro-

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5. See, e.g., Matthias Bjørnlund, *Det Armenske Folkedrab fra Begyndelsen til Enden* (Copenhagen: Kristeligt Dagblads forlag, 2013), 257; Jensine Ørtz, *Armeniske Martyrer*, KMA Pamflet Nr. 102, København 1917; Jensine Oertz Peters (Jensine Ørtz), *Tests and Triumphs of Armenians in Turkey and Macedonia* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1940); <http://www.aga-online.org/texts/malatia.php?locale=de>; <http://www.imprescriptible.fr/rhac/tome2/p4ch1>; Alma Johansson, *Ett folk i landsflykt: Ett år ur armeniernes historia* (Stockholm: KMA, 1930); 7 *Gamle Koner* (Lemvig 1927); H. L. Larsen, *Blodets og Taarernes Land i Europa. En Orientrejse 1922* (Industrimissionen i Armenien, 1922); John O. Latrides, "Missionary Educators and the Asia Minor Disaster: Anatolia College's Move to Greece," *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 4 2 (October 1986): 143-57.

6. See, e.g., Isabel B. Rose, *Great Little Greece* (Boston, MA: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1931), 8-11; Ruth A. Parmelee, "Meeting Salonica's Needs," *The Life Boat* 28 7, (July 1925): 199-201; Ruth A. Parmelee, *A Pioneer in the Euphrates Valley* (Princeton: Gomidas Institute, 2002 (1967)); Abraham D. Krikorian & Eugene L. Taylor, "Finding a Photograph for a Caption: Dr. Ruth A. Parmelee's Comments on some Euphrates (Yezrad) College Professors and their Fate during the Armenian Genocide", *Armenian News Networks/Groong*, 27 June 2011, <http://www.groong.com/orig/ak-20110627.html#sdendnotelsym>; Esther Pohl Lovejoy, *Certain Samaritans* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1933 (1927)), passim; "Asserts Atrocities Continue in Smyrna. Dr. Esther Lovejoy Describes Systematic Robbery and Outrages by Troops," *New York Times*, 3 October 1922; Bertha B. Morley, *Marsovan 1915: The Diaries of Bertha Morley* (Ann Arbor, MI.: Gomidas Institute, 2000).

7. In 1908, Danish-German missionary Anna Jensen from Frankfurt am Main went with Wilhelmine Grünhagen to Mezreh, where she worked at an orphanage. In 1915-1916 she worked at an Ottoman field hospital in Skutari near Constantinople (today the Üsküdar quarter in Istanbul), then, in 1916-1917, she worked as a nurse treating Armenian orphans in Aleppo. After the Armistice she went to the Ottoman Armenian provinces until she was expelled along with most other Western missionaries and relief workers in 1919.

8. See, e.g., H. L. Larsen, *Blodets og Taarernes Land i Europa. En Orientrejse 1922*, passim.

9. Tiniki Mahali (Teneke Mahalle) is a Turkish (in Ottoman as well as modern Turkish) term that was probably brought to Thessaloniki by Turkish-speaking Greek refugees. We thank Ugur Ümit Üngör, Amsterdam, and Stavros Terry Stavridis, Wapato, Washington, for this piece of information.



loans offered to Armenian entrepreneurs who wanted to start a small business like a bakery or a shop; distributing bibles in Armenian; running workshops for Armenian women and men to create jobs and produce handicrafts to be sold at bazaars in Denmark; providing homes for the old and the sick; and running a school for boys and girls in grades one to three. All in all some 200-500 survivors of the Armenian genocide and Kemalist persecution were housed, financed, employed, and/or educated by the organization at any given time from the early 1920s.

One of the IM homes in Thessaloniki, the so-called Mothers' Home, was reserved specifically for Armenian refugee women and girls from the Smyrna (Izmir) region who had just arrived in the city, pregnant from being raped by Turkish soldiers in their homeland, and in 1922-23 similar homes were run by the organization in Athens and Dionysi.<sup>10</sup> It was part of a conscious effort by the Industrial Mission to provide shelter and education for these often marginalized, traumatized, and stigmatized women and their children, although they were to be kept in isolation from those who did not suffer a similar fate – as Jensine Ørtz and the head of the board of directors, provost Hans Lauritz Larsen, wrote in a direct address to their members and sponsors in *Industrimissionens Blad*, the IM monthly journal:

[Ørtz:] What do you think we should do? There are very many young women, even girls as young as 13-14 years of age, who have been in the hands of the Turks, and they are now to become mothers in a few months. I don't believe we can mix these girls with our young girls from Rodosto who have avoided such a fate. But what do you think? [Larsen:] I don't believe we can have them living and working together either. But what about those poor girls who have been ravaged and then thrown out to be picked up by their loved ones or by other merciful persons, those who now await such a sad fate? What do you, dear friends, think we should do with those poor youngsters? If there was money for a special home for them, then, by the grace of God, there would also be time to do the deed of the Good Samaritan to those who literally fell amongst thieves.<sup>11</sup>

A typical example of the massive trauma, loss, and seemingly endless displacement that such refugees in Greece had to suffer is provided by Mariam Dilsisian, daughter of a rich Armenian merchant from Eskishehir (Eskisehir; Eski Shehir): In 1915 she was deported through Konya, Tarsus, Adana, and Aleppo towards Der Zor, where she witnessed the mass murder by fire of Armenian boys. She escaped to the mountains and was subsequently sheltered by an Arab Christian. Then, when it was decreed that anyone hiding Armenians would be executed, she was expelled from that household and forcibly married to a Turkish officer. She escaped once more and was sent by British soldiers to safety in Port Said in Egypt. From there she returned to Eskishehir after the end of the World War, only to be driven out yet again when the Kemalists took over the town.<sup>12</sup>

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10. H. L. Larsen, *Et Folk i Nød: Træk af Armeniernes Trængsler*, 61.

11. *Industrimissionens Blad* 1 4 (1922): 49. The other members of the IM board were Nielsen Vrads, Kantor Bech Nielsen, and office manager Alfred Hansen: *Industrimissionen i Armenien (Hjælp til Selvhjælp). Bestyrelsens Udførlige Redegørelse af Sagen og Referat fra Mødet i Odense den 1. marts 1927* (Holbæk, 1927), 5. IM still exists and is now called *Dansk Armeniermission*: see [www.armenien.dk](http://www.armenien.dk).

12. H. L. Larsen, *Falden Blandt Røvere: Armenierne paa Apostelen Paulus Veje. En Orientrejse 1924* (Århus: Industrimissionen i Armenien, 1924), 42-49.

## The play

Perhaps some of the Armenian women genocide survivors who performed and most likely wrote or co-wrote the play about the 1909 Adana massacres, a play transcribed and translated in full below, came from the Mothers' Home.<sup>13</sup> What is certain, however, is that the actors drew on their own experiences from before, during, and after the genocide to create an artistic rendering of real events – as Hans Lauritz Larsen writes in his short introduction to the play (which he transcribed in full in Danish in a 1924 book about his inspection tour to Thessaloniki):

It should not be forgotten what was the cause [of the present situation for the Armenians in Thessaloniki]. – The past, which is the reason for all the suffering, was vividly described to us by our young girls who joyfully greeted us at our workshops, and the following lines are thus meant to describe the past, the conditions they endured when they were persecuted by the Turks. It should be noted that what is presented here as a drama is not made up or fiction; it is the bitter reality, retold by those who lived through it, and I can add that there wasn't a dry eye in the audience as these aspects from the times of trouble were retold in the vivid words of the Orientals.<sup>14</sup>

Like the sermon by Thessaloniki's Armenian bishop featured below, the play was most likely translated from Armenian into Danish by Jensine Ørtz, who spoke and read Armenian fluently. According to Larsen, the title of the play is *Sorrow is Turned to Joy*, a slight paraphrase of a quote from the New Testament, John 16:20, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." It is arguably an early (though not the first)<sup>15</sup> recorded instance of an Armenian theatrical play with a genocide theme. Because although the events described in the play take place shortly after – and revolve around – the massacres of some 20-30.000 Armenians in and around Adana in 1909,<sup>16</sup> the cast of women genocide survivors

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13. One should perhaps also consider the less likely possibility that the play could in fact be based on or simply be an earlier, unknown play that could have been written in the immediate aftermath of the Adana massacres.

14. Larsen, 1924, 29.

15. As one of the anonymous reviewers of the article has kindly pointed out, Suren Partevian (Bartevian) wrote fiction, including plays, with a genocide theme as early as during the First World War. The writings on the Cilician/Adana massacres and related issues by Zapeł Esaian (Zabel Essaian/Yesayian) are also noteworthy. See, e.g., Marc Nichanian, "Testimony: From Document to Monument," in *The Armenian Genocide: Cultural and Ethical Legacies*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian, 51-52 (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2007); *Notable Women in Modern Armenian Drama: An Anthology*, ed. Nishan Parlakian (Belmont, MA: The Armenian Heritage Press, 2009); Rubina Perroomian, "Tears and Laughter of Cilician Armenia: Literary Representations of Destruction and Revival, 1909-1918," in *Armenian Cilicia*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian & Simon Payaslian, 392ff (Mazda Publishers, 2008); Rubina Perroomian, *Literary Responses to Catastrophe: A Comparison of the Armenian and Jewish Experiences* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1993), 89ff; "Armenian Women Victims of Genocide," in *Women and War: A Historical Encyclopedia from Antiquity to the Present*, vol. I, ed. Bernard A. Cook, 29-31 (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2006).

16. Matthias Bjørnlund, "Adana and Beyond: Revolution and Massacre in the Ottoman Empire Seen Through Danish Eyes, 1908/9," *Haigazian Armenological Review* 30 (2010): 125-56; Bedros Der Matossian, "From Bloodless Revolution to Bloody Counterrevolution: The Adana Massacres of 1909," *Genocide Studies & Prevention* 6 2 (2011): 152-73; Helen Davenport Gibbons, *The Red Rugs of Tarsus: A Woman's Record of the Armenian Massacre of 1909* (New York: The Century Co., 1917); Duckett

clearly, as pointed out by Larsen in the above quote, also draw on their experiences from 1915 onwards when performing (and, perhaps, writing) the play. Thus the play can be said to be representative of the sufferings of all Armenians and other victim groups during the final decades of the Ottoman Empire and the creation of the Turkish republic, especially the women and children.

This highly unusual theatrical performance was staged in the Industrial Mission's meeting hall in Thessaloniki in April 1924. Here, the IM field staff and a group of Armenians in their care entertained a delegation from the organization's board of directors in Denmark, among them Hans Lauritz Larsen and Rev. Johan Nielsen-Vrads.<sup>17</sup> Besides inspecting all areas of IM's work in the city, visiting the ABCFM and League of Nations operations for inspiration, and attending the play as guests of honor, the two Protestant clergymen had both accepted an invitation to preach at an ecumenical April 24 genocide commemoration service in the Apostolic church in Thessaloniki, a service led by bishop Ejervanth (Yervand).<sup>18</sup> In his own closing address to the large crowd of Apostolic, Protestant, and Catholic Armenians who filled the church and its premises, the bishop, like the women in the play, tried to make sense of the overwhelming amount of suffering that had befallen the Armenians before, during and after the genocide:

[...] Never before has a nation suffered what we have suffered. [...]. We waited for freedom and light through dark times, but world politics were always against us. We sat with shaking hands, but no one came to our rescue. Our eyes were directed towards the West, and yet we are here. We made many mistakes, but let it be our goal to stay in the true light and hurry towards the true goal. And when we commemorate our victims today, we commemorate that never before have such abuse and such martyrs been seen. But we will see God's guiding hand during these hard times. We witnessed our loved ones and our young fall along the road, and then we thought of our nation's future. The youth were like the rising sun. Our women, our young girls, sacred in our families, were trampled underfoot; we had to endure seeing them taken away by strangers. Many passed out and fell before they went to other men; many still live a hopeless life in the mountains, and we were not able to set our young women free. If we think about this we lose all hope. Yet, we will not forget that God can bring the light. [...]<sup>19</sup>

In his sermon, the bishop, who had experienced persecution and imprisonment himself in Adrianople (Edirne) during the war years, addressed not only the Armenian genocide and the general theological and philosophical problem of evil. He also

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Z. Ferriman, *The Young Turks and the Truth about the Holocaust at Adana in Asia Minor during April, 1909* (London, 1913).

17. Larsen was in a way also a veteran when it came to backing persecuted Armenians, as he among other things had served as an interpreter for the German Rev. Johannes Lohmann when he toured Denmark and Sweden shortly after the 1890s Abdülhamid II massacres to raise awareness and generate support. Furthermore, the well-educated and well-travelled clergyman was also editor of the newspaper *Kristeligt Folkeblad*, member of the board of directors of an orphanage in Jerusalem, etc.

18. According to the Julian calendar that was still in use, April 24 would be April 11. We thank Abraham D. Krikorian and Eugene L. Taylor for this observation.

19. H. L. Larsen, 1924, 76. On the April 24 commemoration in 1923, see *Industrimissionens Blad* 2 7 (1923): 93-94.

specifically, and with considerable empathy, addressed a subject that is often taboo among victim groups after genocide: the perpetrators' large-scale and systematic abuse of women and children.<sup>20</sup> Some of the Armenian women themselves also tried to address this difficult subject in the refugee camps in Thessaloniki, but, as Larsen describes it, when they got to the part where the Turks raped the young girls, they all broke down crying.<sup>21</sup> So, how to speak about the unspeakable?

As always, art is one possible answer, a way to address both the specific and universal aspects of suffering, and perhaps also to provide some amount of sorely needed therapeutic relief, meaning, and hope for the future.<sup>22</sup> From the ancient Greeks, for whom tragedy

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20. Matthias Bjørnlund, "A Fate Worse than Dying': Sexual Violence during the Armenian Genocide," in *Brutality and Desire: War and Sexuality in Europe's Twentieth Century*, ed. Dagmar Herzog, 16-58 (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Vahé Tachjian, "Gender, nationalism, exclusion: the reintegration process of female survivors of the Armenian genocide," *Nations and Nationalism* 15 1 (2009): 60-80; Ugur Ümit Üngör, "Orphans, Converts, and Prostitutes: Social Consequences of War and Persecution in the Ottoman Empire, 1914-1923," *War in History* 19 2 (2012): 173-92; Lerna Ekmekcioglu, "A Climate for Abduction, A Climate for Redemption: The Politics of Inclusion during and after the Armenian Genocide," *Comparative Studies in Society & History* 55 3 (2013): 522-53; Taner Akcam, Dicle Akar Bilgin & Matthias Bjørnlund, *The League of Nations in Aleppo: Armenian Women and Children Survivors 1921-1927* (2014), <http://www.armenocide.net/armenocide/orphan-children.nsf!OpenDatabase>

21. H. L. Larsen, 1924, 28.

22. See, e.g., *The Theatre of Genocide: Four Plays about Mass Murder in Rwanda, Bosnia, Cambodia, and Armenia*, ed. Robert Skloot (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008); *The Theatre of the Holocaust*, ed. Robert Skloot, vol. I-II (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982 & 1999); Nishan Parlakian, *Contemporary Armenian American Drama: An Anthology of Ancestral Voices* (Columbia University Press, 2004); Nishan Parlakian & S. Peter Cowe, *Modern Armenian Drama: An Anthology* (Columbia University Press, 2001); Gene A. Plunka, *Holocaust Drama: The Theater of Atrocity* (Cambridge University Press, 2009); Marie-Chantal Kalisa, "Theatre and the Rwandan Genocide," *Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice* 18 4 (2006): 515-21; Amanda Breed, *Theatre for Reconciliation in Post-Genocide Rwanda* (University of Manchester, 2009); Karen Malpede, "Thoughts on a Theater of Witness and Excerpts from Two Plays of Witness: *Better People*, *The Beekeeper's Daughter*," in *Genocide, War, and Human Survival*, ed. Charles B. Strozier & Michael Flynn (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996), 231-42; [www.holocausttheaterarchive.org](http://www.holocausttheaterarchive.org), [www.armeniandrama.org](http://www.armeniandrama.org). Post-WWII plays more or less about the Armenian genocide also include, in no particular order, *Night Over Erzinga: An Armenian Family's Story of Survival and Reconciliation* by Adriana Sevahn Nichols (2011), see also <http://www.illumemag.com/zine/articleDetail.php?The-Theatre-of-Armenian-Genocide-13840>; *Forty* by Leonora Rianda, (2014/2015); *Das Märchen vom letzten Gedanken* by Edgar Hilsenrath, (2014 (1989)), *Upstanders* by Teresa Docherty et al. (2008); Joyce Van Dyke, *Deported / a dream play* by Joyce Van Dyke, 2012; *Forgotten Bread* by Sevan Kaloustian Green (2010); *Bleach* by Leah Ryan (1999); *Brainpeople* by Jose Rivera (2010); *Protest* by Aram Kouyoumdjian (2005); *Dear Armen* by Kamee Abrahamian, Tiffany Golarz & Lee Williams Boudakian, 2013; *Silence* by Herand M. Markarian, 2012; *Flesh and Tenderness* by Kristen Lazarian, 2008; *Red Dog Howls* by Alexander Dinelar, 2012; *On the Couch with Nora Armani* by Nora Armeni, 2003; *Nine Armenians* by Leslie Ayvazian, 2013; *Nicht ich bin der Mörder, sondern er: Der Prozess Talaat Pascha/The Talaat Pasha Trial – A Theatre Project for Intercultural Studies* by Heinz Böke et al., 2010; *Soujourn at Ararat* by Nora Armani & Gerald Papasian, 1986; *State of Denial* by Rahul Varma, 2012; *Abaga* by Torange Yeghiazarian, 2001; *Komitas* by Lilly Thomassian, 2012; *The 40 Days of Musa Dagh* adapted for theatre by Melik Kocharyan, 1961 (1933); *I Wish I Die Singing* by Neil McPherson, 2005; *Great Silence* by Berj Zeytuntsian, 2009; *Beast on the Moon* by Richard Kalinoski, 1995; *FOUND* by Anoush Baghdassarian, 2014; and *Bitlis* by William Saroian, 1975. In the 1930s, Armenian school children and teachers in Thessaloniki staged a play, *The Refugees*, a tragic story about a family of genocide survivors; furthermore, several playwrights

equaled catharsis, an emotional cleansing that would bring about renewal and restoration, to modern psychological dramas, theatre has been used as a means of “living out” and conveying complex emotional experiences, transcending the “mere” telling of stories as it engages our entire physical presence simply by our occupying the same space as the actors on the stage.<sup>23</sup> And this is the avenue chosen by the group of Armenian women performing *Sorrow is Turned to Joy*, a play that appears to have been written specifically for the visit of the delegation from the Danish Evangelical donor organization. While the play to the authors of this article seems to contain elements of Christian drama – with the Biblical imagery and the strong themes of suffering, sacrifice, death, and resurrection that one finds in medieval Mystery and Morality Plays as well as in Easter Drama and Passion Plays<sup>24</sup> – it also fits several of the elements used today to define the modern “theatre of genocide”:

Like all engaged art, [the theatre of genocide] seeks to comment on and influence public discourse through various strategies: by the description of the victims’ suffering and the assertion of their essential worthiness, the discussion of the perpetrators’ motivation, the presentation of images of healing and compassion, the evocation of empathy, the questioning of the proper use of historical knowledge, and even the expansion and dissemination of what the critic Susan Sontag called a “collective instruction” of the public.<sup>25</sup>

It is impossible (for us) to detach the story from the fact that those who (if not wrote it then) performed in it are the survivors of the very atrocities that are related in the play. This alone makes it utterly impossible to judge the play purely as a work of art. And yet it must be noted that they display a distinct awareness and knowledge of theatrical text. They

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in Soviet Armenia dealt with the genocide, especially from the 1960s: personal communication with Suzanne Khardalian, Stockholm, Sweden, November 2013. For a brief introduction to the Armenian influence on Ottoman/Turkish theatre, see [http://www.genocide-museum.am/eng/g\\_brief\\_06.php](http://www.genocide-museum.am/eng/g_brief_06.php). See also Ali Budak, “The Contributions of the Armenians Over the Constitution of A New Social Life and Literature in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century,” *Ozean Journal of Social Sciences* 1 1 (2008): 65-74; Eden Naby, “Theater, Language and Inter-Ethnic Exchange: Assyrian Performance before World War I,” *Iranian Studies* 40 4 (2007): 501-10; Chrysothemis Stamatopoulou-Vasilakou, “Greek Theater in Southeastern Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean from 1810 to 1961,” *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 25 (2007): 267-84; Mara Yanni, “Shakespeare and the Audiences of the Greek Traveling Actors,” in *Shakespeare Worldwide and the Idea of an Audience*, ed. Tina Krontiris & Jyotsna Singh (Thessaloniki: Aristotle University, 2007), 175-92; Cora Skylstad, *Acting the Nation: women on the stage and in the audience of theatre in the late Ottoman empire and early Turkish republic*, MA thesis (University of Oslo, 2010); Olga Borovaya, *Modern Ladino Culture: press, belles-lettres, and theatre in the late Ottoman Empire* (Indiana University Press, 2012). Armenian theatre was also performed in places such as the Caucasus (e.g., in Tbilisi/Tiflis, Yerevan, and Baku, then part of the Russian Empire) and in Persia/Iran. See, e.g., the “Armen Ohanian” entry here: <http://armenianwomen.wordpress.com/>

23. See, e.g., Charles B. Daniels & Sam Scully, “Pity, Fear, and Catharsis in Aristotle’s Poetics,” *Noûs* 26 2 (1992): 204-17; Muriel Mirak-Weissbach, “Power of Art to Move Mind and Heart: Dink Remembered in Frankfurt,” *The Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, 6 February 2014. See also, more generally, Richard Kearney, “Narrating Pain: The Power of Catharsis,” *Paragraph* 30 1 (2007): 51-66; <http://chgs.umn.edu/museum/index.html>.

24. See, e.g., *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 8, ed. Leeds Barroll (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1996), 54; Francis Edwards, *Ritual and Drama: The Medieval Theatre* (James Clarke & Co., 1976), 36ff.

25. Skloot, red., 2008, 5.



adhere to a classic dramaturgy of beginning, middle, turning point, and end, and include classic ploys such as female characters dressing up as young men in order to survive, a grip perhaps made most famous by William Shakespeare, and once the true identity of these young women is revealed some sort of order is restored.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, while they refrain from fleshing out the atrocities, there is a remarkable lack of sentimentality in the young “shepherd’s” recounting of what was done to the young girls when they were taken to the mountains. It is almost matter of factly described, and as such becomes very powerful as it also suggests a widespread knowledge of what actually went on, of how horror and endurance of horror become the normal state of affairs during times of massacre. The play may not exactly promise a happy ending – there seems to have been too much death and misery for that – but, as the title suggests, the message is that sorrow can still be turned to joy through shared pain and through reuniting with relatives who were believed to be lost. Thus at least small parts of a world destroyed, the world of the Ottoman Armenians, can be restored. So, whatever one might think of the purely artistic quality of the play, it is a strong testament to the courage and survival instinct of some of those who were subjected to almost unspeakable atrocities.

What follows below is a complete translation, as literal as possible (including the perhaps sometimes peculiar spelling of Armenian names and phrases), of the play as it appears in Larsen’s 1924 book, the only known source. It is a haunting story, realistic as well as stylized; a story both modern and ancient, surreal and grotesque, not unlike the collection of poetry by Siamanto, *Bloody News from My Friend*, which also revolves around the Adana massacres.<sup>27</sup> It is a story of love, death, loss, mourning, faith, despair, and redemption, of sacrifice, madness, suicide, and hope against hope, of massacre as a force of nature, of a common bond created through suffering, and of attaining the power “to stand up to tell the world what happened,” as it is put. The play takes place somewhere in the killing fields, probably in the Taurus Mountains outside Adana, shortly after the massacres in 1909.

## **Sorrow is Turned to Joy**

[Introductory note by Larsen or, more likely, by the unknown writer(s) of the play]: *These women, who have lost everything, including their children, meet and comfort each other.*

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26. Shakespeare’s so-called “Transvestite Plays” include *Twelfth Night*, *As You Like It*, and *The Merchant of Venice*. It should be noted that Armenian men and boys frequently dressed up as girls or women in order to survive on the death marches during the Armenian genocide, while girls and women would seek ways to make themselves less attractive to avoid sexual abuse (see Bjørnlund, 2009, *passim*), and it seems likely that Armenian girls and women would on occasion (i.e., when such a survival strategy would appear to have a chance of succeeding, or when there simply was no other alternative) dress up as boys to avoid rape or forced marriage, as suggested in the play.

27. Siamanto (Atom Yarjanian), *Bloody News from My Friend*, translated by Peter Balakian & Nevart Yaghlian (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996). Artistic interpretations of/reactions to the Adana massacres also include a Requiem Mass composed by K. Kalfaian (1913), as well as poetry and writings by Ruben Sevak (Rupen Sevag Tchilinguirian) and Taniel Varoujan, both of whom were arrested, tortured, and murdered like Siamanto and hundreds of others in connection with the round-up of Ottoman Armenian intellectuals and other community leaders on April 24, 1915. See, e.g., Mikayel Shamtanchian, *The Fatal Night: An Eyewitness Account of the Extermination of Armenian Intellectuals in 1915*, translated by Ishkhan Jinbashian (Studio City, California: Manjikian Publications, 2007).



*Araksi:* Today is Easter for those with a happy heart, but to me and my fellow sufferers it is a day of sorrow. We mothers do not know where our children are or how they have died. Oh God, my God, how is it possible to go through all this without dying. But we Armenians are like the burning bush in the desert, it burns and burns, but is not consumed by the flames. Oh God, my God, when will you let me meet my death as a wonderful release from this life? But, alas! I am alive, and like other mothers I will go to the mountains and search for the bones of my children. Oh Heaven, will I be happy even if I find the bones of my big girl? Oh, my home, when I look upon your white walls it is as if they have big red stripes of blood, and there, on the floor, she took her first steps and called for me with her sweet babbling. – And the last day she was here she left home saying, “Mother, I’m going to school!”, and never, ever did she come back. – Oh, my girl, where are you, you are impossible for me to find.

*Vartuhi:* Araksi, sister! Why do you not come with us to the graveyard? By letting our tears flow we find comfort. When the tears truly flow it is as if the pain goes numb.

*Manik:* Yes, we are at the graveyard, but it is not like any other, because our graveyard lies in the vast fields, mountains, and valleys.

*Haiganush:* Let us go. – It is Easter. Other people celebrate the Resurrection, but we...- Let us seek the bones of our children.

*Dikranuhi:* We cannot put flowers on their graves. No, let the lilies of the field bloom over their bones, and let other flowers be the incense, the sweet scent that the wind sweeps across their bones, bones that are pale from the sun and the wind.

*Araksi:* Yes, oh yes, my fellow sufferers, let us go to the mountains. Even if we cannot find their bones our tears will wash the earth that drank their blood.

*They all go out searching.*

*Araksi:* Alas, look at all the women here, all with the same aim as us.

*Araksi looks for a lonely spot, while the others go to the ravines to search for the bones of their children.*

*Araksi:* Loneliness, loneliness is what I love. Oh God, this life is no longer worth living. Where is my girl, maybe these valleys and mountains have heard her last cry for help, maybe they have heard if she still lives at the mercy of her assailant, or if her corpse was devoured by wild animals or by the birds in the sky. Only you, my God, know! If only I could find her bones I would use them to make a crucifix to remind me each day of Golgotha and the Cross where my innocent savior died. We Christians

are called upon to walk in His footsteps, but alas!, it is so difficult to do. God, you alone can give me the strength to endure this. It is as if everything falls apart, as if I am about to lose my mind. There is this desire, this urge to howl like a wild animal, it is as if it was all a dream, without any connection to reality. Yet you, almighty God, must be part of it all. Oh mountains, do you not hear my crying and moaning, do you not even bother to give me an answer?

*The three other women come towards her, and she starts speaking to them.*

*Araksi:* Excuse me, you have probably walked through many valleys and ravines to get here, I wonder if you have come upon skeletons that might look like my daughter's on your journey? Today, I am out looking for her bones.

*Arschalousch:* Yes, sister, we understand, but do not sit here alone, come with us and we will tell you who we are, and let us try to share each other's pain and forget.

*Araksi:* Forget.

*Hermine:* We are three mothers, and like you we are out looking for the bones of our loved ones, we have been wandering around but we found no grave or human bones.

*Iskuhi:* We have been searching since this morning. It is as if we are lost. It is our destiny to still, still be kept on the grindstone. I am surprised that we are still human, that there is still something left of this perishable body. – We want death, we long for it like a dear visitor, but God does not send us this blessing.

*Arschalousch:* Oh sister, why are you crying?

*Iskuhi:* Maybe because we cannot die.

*Arschalousch:* But do not forget that there is a divine reason for the suffering of us Armenian women. We will encourage each other to endure until the hour of God strikes, and to seek his will in everything. Like you, we all feel that death would be a welcome guest.

*Hermine:* Oh merciful God in Heaven, how can it be that not one drop of blessed rain falls on our fatally wounded hearts? – As soon as the clouds in the skies of our lives begin to clear and we dream of light for ourselves and our children, once again, you send black, thick clouds with lightning bolts that suddenly strike us.

*Iskuhi:* What are you doing? We walked together to forget what happened, to comfort each other. It is enough now. Our bodies can take no more. Let us commemorate our dead as those who now stand before

God's throne night and day, and let us thereby also prepare ourselves to become worthy of joining them.

*Araksi:* Oh, what a strange feeling! I sat alone on the mountain and heard only echoes of my cries. God sent you to me. You found me in one of the most dangerous moments of my life. Our lives are chained together by pain and crying, a third chain is still missing, it is death.

*Arschalusch:* Come, let us continue walking, just another short stretch before we have searched it all and convinced ourselves that the bones of our loved ones are not here.

*Hermine:* Yes, come, let us not stand here any longer, - just to find one bone would be enough of a reward for our toils today – let us forget ourselves and search – search.

*Iskuhi:* Listen, is it not the voice of the shepherd, is he not blowing his shepherd's horn? Let us go to him, he, who wanders around up here every day and talks to his sheep.

*The shepherd:* Alas, my sheep! You walk around, grazing ever so joyously, not knowing what awaits you. One day you shall die to preserve human lives. Oh my sheep! I do not know whose turn it is tomorrow. Every time I am in town and see sheep and lambs hanging, slaughtered, and see humans with big knives rip and cut them, it is as if I am being whipped with thorns. Oh, how difficult my work is, truly to be a shepherd and yet endure all this. But God, what can I say, it is your will. The animals must be sacrificed to the humans that you love above all. Oh God, you did see my tears yesterday when the beloved little lambs had to adorn the dinner table of a rich person, and there – there the other dear little lambs come to meet me, happy and trusting, and I, I must surrender them to death. – I cannot, – it is not for me, an orphan with a sensitive girl's heart. Even if I fool others with my costume my heart stays the same – it is not a job for me.

*Arschalusch:* We heard your voice and walked here to ask you: have you seen human bones up here?

*Hermine:* We have wandered the entire day, back and forth, to find the graves or bones of our loved ones. We wonder if you have seen any such thing. We beg of you to tell us, even if it were to be found in the wolf's lair.

*Iskuhi:* Noble shepherd! Do not be surprised. We are not the half savages our appearance might indicate, we are mothers, desperate mothers whose loved ones were torn from our embrace. Help us, enlighten us, are there any traces of human corpses or bones here? It is the comfort we went out to find today – the bones of our loved ones.

*Araksi:* Oh, good shepherd, hurry up, answer our questions, we are so tired, it is impossible for us to stand and to walk. Open your lips and tell us some good news.

*The shepherd:* May I ask you to sit here on the green grass? It is my living room. – Yes, on the other side, at the foot of the mountain, I will show you a little dirt mound. We were four girls who were only lightly wounded, but we, too, were thrown on the carts with all the other dead or half-dead and driven here. It was around sunset, and we were all unloaded there. They began to throw rocks and dirt on us to cover our small, innocent bodies that were to shape this mound, hidden and silenced to the world, but God gave the four of us the power to stand up to tell the world what happened.

*Arschalousch:* We do not want to ask much. The wounds in our hearts are so deep and drip with fresh blood. Just tell us where the other three are.

*Araksi:* How old were they? Are they your size?

*The shepherd:* Yes, we all went to the same school and we were in the same class. The storm broke out so fast that we did not have time to run back home, so we fled up here where we were discovered and nearly killed. For a while we lived of dirt and grass here, we were afraid of humans, and then we draped ourselves in the shepherd's cloak, trying to live and be useful in this way.

*Hermine:* That means they are shepherds like you. Where are they now? Can we not get to see them? If you tell us where they are we will never forget your goodness, oh, hurry up – –.

*Araksi:* If you can help despairing mothers who searched for their children's bones in the mountains, to find their girls alive, you will be the reason we can once again find happiness in this world, something which seems so impossible to us now.

*Iskuhi:* I am sorry, what school did you go to?

*The shepherd:* "To Askranian's school! Oh, if only I, too, could find my mother! Dear Madam, do not think that I did not have a mother. Oh majrik [*mayrik, mother*]! Majrik! My home, my home! I know what it means to have a good home, but I have heard that our whole town has been burnt to ashes and that no one is still alive, and this is why I have given it all up to hide in this shepherd's cloak. Tell me; where are you from, and where do you come from?"

*Arschalousch:* As you may imagine, we are from a place where life has begun again, where it is not completely extinct. Maybe you can find your father and your mother there.

*The shepherd:* Quiet, do you hear the singing? It is one of the other shepherds. Wait here a moment, she will be here soon, we often meet here.

*Araksi:* Oh, what do I hear? The voice of my girl. – My girl, my dear girl! Does your voice come from Heaven? Then I am in Heaven. Paradise is such a wonderful place, no more pain. – – Goodbye, world, I never want to see you again.

*Araksi faints.*

*Araksi:* Now I am in Heaven, where no one can take my child from me.

*Hermine:* Look, look, here is your girl...

*Araksi's eyes are closed. She has fallen into Hermine's lap, overcome by joy.*

*Anik:* Oh, what am I seeing? Is it my mother, my mother whom I believed to be dead? Majrik! Majrik! Is it you! – – – Why do you not speak? Do you not know your Anik? Look, look, majrik, it is me that you carried in your arms so that no thorns should pierce me. It is me, a shepherd, a hardened shepherd who has struggled with life, an honest fight to keep my purity and earn my bread. Women, women! Why do you stand so petrified, tell me, is it a vision or is it reality, is it really my mother or is it a spirit from Heaven that has taken her form? But what do I see, tears are rolling down her cheeks ...Mother, will you not say something? ... Could it be a spirit that comes by day and not by night to seek me ...Oh, embrace me, it cannot be an evil spirit who wants to attack me. Mother, why do you not say something?

*Iskuhi:* Sisters, let us do something to wake her up. By finding out her child is alive her joy made her senseless and powerless.

*Arschalousch:* "Look, she opens her eyes. Talk. Look. Here is your girl.

*Araksi:* Yes, you wonderful angels, I know. ...So this is heaven. ...Oh, my girl, we are happy here, we have no fear of death any more, or of separation, eternity is here for us, we cannot be persecuted here. ...Here is paradise ... What peace and what rest ...If I had known this I would have come here sooner ...Oh sisters, why do you cry? Rejoice! You, too, will find your children here ...My sweet girl, how did you die? Who killed you?

*Anik:* Mother! I am alive, I am not dead. Who says I am dead! I have gone through many hardships, yes, I stood up from the grave, but mother, why do you not say something?

*Hermine:* Sister, we are still in the world. Your girl is not dead. These are not her dead bones, God let her come back into your arms alive.

*Iskuhi:* This sister believes that she is in heaven, but let us see what she

will do when she is completely awake. Wake up! Wake up! Sister, it is no dream, it is reality.

*Anik:* Majrik, majrik! I am with you.

*Araksi:* Oh, we are still here! What joy, I thought I was up there, that I had died and gone to heaven and found my girl who was dead ...Oh come, let me embrace you, my girl, do not be afraid. I am your mother. Your father is also alive, come, we will go to him.

*Anik:* Majrik! Is hajrik [*hayrik, father*] really alive ...he lives ...

*Araksi:* Yes, he lives, and each and every day he earns all the bread we can eat ...Come, let us go! Oh, what will your father say? We have made promises to God so many times, just so that we might find your grave or bones from your body. But how shall I thank you, Lord, for having my living child in my arms? Oh sisters, I am happy now, it only hurts me that you have not found your girls. May God lead your way so that you might also find them, start a home once again, and regain your will to live.

*Vartuhi:* Look, I have found a bone. Perhaps it is a part of my child's body. Oh, my dear little girl, why do you not answer me? ...Look at the dry bone. I must press it to my chest. What the Turks have completed here in Adana during this spring (1909) is of such a nature that even wild, bloodthirsty animals could not have been more cruel. Oh, my child, my child ...Maybe you look from heaven upon your desperate mother.

*Manik:* On my way here, I met 3-4 children who told me: "We come from our hiding place to search for our mothers. We have heard that several have risen again; oh, tell us if our mothers are alive ...Do not hide anything from us" – Seeing them made such a deep impression on me that I quickly disappeared to hide my tears from them. Oh, my girl, I wonder if you too wander around, searching for your mother, or if you gaze down on me from heaven.

*Siranusch (the shepherd):* Oh, what do I see, the woman who speaks is my mother. How shall I identify myself in such a way that she will not react like Anik's mother?, but waiting – I cannot wait either ...Majrik, majrik! It is me, I am not dead! Embrace me, mother! Mother, is father alive? Why are you mute? Show your joy. It is me. Touch me.

*Haiganusch:* Truly, truly, it is Siranusch. How the shepherd's dress had changed her.

*Manik:* Oh, my girl, you stand here in front of me like an angel. What a wonder that these eyes of mine really see you alive, it is a miracle, a great miracle of God ...Oh sisters! I wish the same happiness for you. Let us walk around, praying that the almighty God will guide us and



that you may also find your children. Come, my child, I must embrace you again, and soon we shall go home. Father is alive. He is home. Our house was not burned down, come, child, home ...home.

*Vartuhi:* Tell me, where did you meet the 3-4 little children, maybe one of them could be my child?

*Manik:* Down there, close to where we split up. Come, it is not night yet.

*Araksi:* Glory to the Lord who has miraculously granted us our two girls. We hope and pray that God will grant you your children, too. Oh my child, you who grew up raised by a mother's soft hand. Your feet had not seen the sun, and now ...Being a mother is hard for an Armenian woman ...Only you, God, can give us the strength ...Come, child, I will hold you to my heart, the heart that was beating in fear and pain for you, but now it jumps with joy. In my deep sorrow and on my clouded sky, God has let a beautiful rainbow appear. He has not forsaken me after all; he let pretty fresh flowers bloom from my crown of thorns instead. God, perform this great miracle for many Armenian mothers so that sorrow may turn to joy here on earth, and so that our children and we may sparkle like finely cut jewels in your crown.

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE STUDIES

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## BOOK REVIEWS<sup>1</sup>

Michael M. Gunter, *Armenian History and the Question of Genocide* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 195 pages.

Reviewed by Israel W. Charny, Executive Director, Institute on the Holocaust and Genocide in Jerusalem; Awarded Armenian Presidential Prize 2011, Editor-in-Chief, Web Magazine GPN GENOCIDE PREVENTION NOW 2010-2012.

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This is the BEST book I have ever read -- which means it is the best of the whole *terrible* world of books that are devoted to ridiculous and ugly denials of absolutely factual known genocides. It is, therefore, a TERRIBLE work.

So the question is what is the meaning of my quite genuine praise for something that I condemn so strongly and uncompromisingly?

This is the best DENIALIST work I have ever seen insofar as it is written with a quietness, and solidity of coverage of issues, and even more *as if* with an apparent fairness of representing ranges of ideas and opinions about issues rather than strong-arm statements of single opinion-truths.

Moreover, Michael Gunter, a professor at Tennessee Tech, opens the book with a clear acknowledgment-disclosure of his significant period of lecturing in Turkey, and even as he says "I have long wanted to present an objective analysis of the Turkish point of view" he clearly conveys that he is very much on the side of Turkish denial of the Armenian Genocide.

Already in the Foreword Gunter cites a smaller number (600,000) of Armenian victims than is generally accepted, a reduction of the number of victims that has long been characteristic of traditional Turkish denial propaganda. He says right out, so that there is no doubt for the reader where his "objective analysis" is heading, that these deaths - - whatever the number, even the lower number would clearly constitute a major genocide - - that "It was neither a premeditated policy perpetrated by the Ottoman Turkish government nor an event unilaterally implemented without cause."

Yes, the author says "cause." If there were killings they were *caused*, and you know by whom -- the victims of course. So we know from the first page of the Foreword quite clearly where our 'objective' analyst stands. Gunter is not only a denier who revises some of the facts of the genocide - thus the lower number of victims than most historians recognize; he also denies the very *essence* of the genocide as having been in any way a premeditated government policy. And he also has pulled one of the ultimates in the denial kit bag of justifying the murders - telling us there was cause for the murders. According to Gunter, the Armenians forced the Turkish government to contain them as rebels. *Tell that to Armenian*

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*soldiers in the Turkish Army as they are taken out and murdered en masse. Tell that to Armenian women and children staggering in the 'desert,' starving, raped, watching their children die or be killed, and themselves cut down by swords.*

But I haven't finished all my praise of Michael Gunter. Gunter is nonetheless a kind denier who continuously throws us bones for our respite - and thereby of course it would seem proves and reproves his announced objectivity. Thus in the same poisonous Foreword he quickly adds to his core statement of denial crocodile tears, "Of course in no way does this excuse the horrible excesses committed by the Turks." *Oh, thank you, Michael, for your understanding of our pain and outrage that you indeed share - - or do you?*

Perhaps the highest praise I can give denier Gunter is that unlike the great deniers that have gone before him - of the Armenian Genocide but also deniers of other genocides such as the Holocaust - Gunter cites a large number of those of us scholars and writers who have published the now wonderfully strong literature confirming the Armenian Genocide - - and I would add genocides of other peoples alongside the Armenians, specifically the Assyrians, Greeks, and Yezidis,<sup>2,3,4</sup> and also the beginning moves of the Ottoman government toward a potential genocide of the Jews in Palestine.<sup>5</sup> Deniers generally stay away from us writers who confirm the Armenian Genocide like a plague. Or they may cite one or two of us to demolish our statements, but rarely if ever do they assemble such a huge number of scholars who clearly stand by recognition of the Armenian Genocide. Gunter also refers to works like *Forty Days of Musa Dagh* and laws and legal institutions and more that clearly account the Armenian Genocide.

Look at the following unbelievable list to who Gunter writes about or cites (- - it is a great list of so many people we would want to invite to a party):

[In a few cases I add explanatory notes]

Akcam, Taner

Alvarez, Alex

Balakian, Peter

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2. Genocide Prevention Now (2011) Special Issue, *Armenian Genocide and Co-Victims: Assyrians, Yezidis, Greeks*, available at: <http://www.genocidepreventionnow.org/Home/GPNISSUES/SpecialIssue5Winter2011.aspx>

3. Tessa Hofmann, Matthias Bjørnlund, Vasileios Meichanetsidis (Editors), *The Genocide of the Ottoman Greeks: Studies on the State-Sponsored Campaign of Extermination of the Christians of Asia Minor, 1912-1922 and Its Aftermath: History, Law, Memory* (New York & Athens: Aristide D. Caratzas, 2011).

4. Israel W. Charny, "The Integrity and Courage to Recognize All the Victims of a Genocide," in Tessa Hofmann, Matthias Bjørnlund, Vasileios Meichanetsidis (Editors), *The Genocide of the Ottoman Greeks: Studies on the State-Sponsored Campaign of Extermination of the Christians of Asia Minor, 1912-1922 and Its Aftermath: History, Law, Memory* (New York & Athens: Aristide D. Caratzas, 2011), 21-38; Republished in *Genocide Prevention Now*, Issue 10, Spring 2012. available at: <http://genocidepreventionnow.org/GPNSearchResults/tabid/64/ctl/DisplayCitation/mid/400/cid/115/Default.aspx>

5. For an introduction to the history of the Turks' expulsion of Jews from Tel Aviv in 1917, see the excellent work by Yair Auron, including the additional references that he gives: Yair Auron, *The Banality of Indifference: Zionism and the Armenian Genocide* ( New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2000), 73-83.

Bardakjian, Kevork

Bloxam, Donald

Bryce, Lord James

*The Blue Book* by Lord Bryce and Arnold Toynbee

Charny, Israel

Dadrian, Vahakn

Davis, Leslie

Dink, Hrant

Dole, Robert (Senator)

Fein, Helen

*Forty Days of Musa Dagh* by Franz Werfel

Gayssot Act

This is a French Law against denials of crimes including genocide committed by the Nazis during WWII, and that is the basis for the recent efforts in France to expand French law to cover other recognized genocides such as the Armenian Genocide.

Genocide resolutions by the US Congress

Gurr, Ted Robert

Harff, Barbara

Hovanissian, Richard G.

Huttenbach, Henry

International Court of Justice

International Criminal Court

International Crisis Group

Johannsohn, Kurt

Jorgensen, Torben

Kaiser, Hilmar

Kopf, David

Kuschner, Bernard

Kristof, Nicholas

Kuper, Leo

In my judgment, following Lemkin, the late Leo Kuper was the preeminent genocide scholar in the world, and he adamantly recognized the Armenian Genocide.

Lemkin, Raphael

Lemkin is the creator of the word *genocide* and the father of the UN Genocide Convention. Much of Lemkin's early work was deeply inspired by the Armenian Genocide.

Lepsius, Johannes

Libaridian, Gerard

Markusen, Eric

Melson, Robert

Minasian, Edward

Midlarsky, Manus

Morgenthau, Henry

Morgenthau is the well-known US ambassador to Turkey who wrote so fully and passionately about the Armenian Genocide at the time. As noted earlier, at a conference in Turkey at Istanbul University we heard pseudo-learned allegations that Morgenthau's well-known diary is a forged document, like many other evidences of the Armenian Genocide that Turks easily call "forgeries," including even the record of *their* court martials of the genocides.

Naim Bey

Oran Baskin

A leading Turkish intellectual who fights against government denial of the Armenian Genocide

Pamuk Orhan

Papazian, Dennis

Phillips, David L.

Leader of TARC (The Turkish Armenian Reconciliation Commission) which contracted with the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) for a report on whether the Armenian Genocide indeed constituted genocide. When the Commission ruled that it did, all the Turkish participants in TARC pulled out, never to be seen again in that supposed effort at a joint commission with the Armenians.<sup>6</sup> Despite my high praises of Gunter for covering lots of differing ideas, I note that he does not even mention the ICTJ ruling.

Power, Samantha

Rummel, Rudolf

Safrastian, Ruben

Sanjian, Avedis

Sarafian, Ara

Sassounian, Harut

Semelin, Jacques

Smith, Roger; and Eric Markusen, and Robert Jay Lifton

Smith, Markusen and Lifton authored a famous wonderful paper about how Turkey's ambassador to the US, with the assistance of an ostensible scholar at Princeton, went after Lifton for daring to refer to the Armenian Genocide in his milestone study of the Nazi

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6. International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) Report Prepared for TARC, *The Applicability of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide to Events which Occurred during the Early Twentieth Century*, Executive Summary of Legal Conclusions (February 10, 2003), available at: [http://www.armenian-genocide.org/Affirmation.244/current\\_category.5/affirmation\\_detail.html](http://www.armenian-genocide.org/Affirmation.244/current_category.5/affirmation_detail.html)



doctors at Auschwitz.

Staub, Ervin

Suny, Ronald

Tatz, Colin

Ternon, Yves

Theriault, Henry

Vartian, Ross

Walker, Christopher

Wegner, Armin

Weitz, Eric

Zoryan Institute

Zwaan, Ton

Whew! Wow! (*There are so many sources given by Gunter that I now feel badly for some dear and respected colleagues, such as Yair Auron and Rouben Adalian, for examples, who have been passed over by Gunter undeservedly.*)

Have you ever seen a denier of any genocide who quotes so extensively from so many sources that say clearly and decisively that the very genocide he is denying really took place? Now the reader will understand more fully my enthusiastic ‘recommendation’ of this book.

How can you expect anything but objectivity, fairness and serious scholarship from someone who is so open-minded and thorough?

Gunter refers to a Turkish assertion taken from a book published in Ankara that claims the famous British *Blue Book* by Lord Bryce and Arnold Toynbee is a “so-called document that contains nothing more than one sided British propaganda and hence is not worth dwelling upon.” (p. 13) Here, our open-minded scholar who quotes so many of us was quoting from one of his Turkish sources, and indeed it is very important to bring in Turkish sources too, isn’t it? But let’s also hear what Gunter himself says immediately following: “The above analysis also indicated that both Bryce and Morgenthau held powerful and deep rooted prejudices against the Turks that undoubtedly prevented them from seeing the entire situation. Although the Armenians did suffer grievously so too did their antagonists.” (p. 13)

As noted, Gunter acknowledges some killing but explains the killing constituted perfectly normal security measures against a rebellious people. Gunter refers to *some* people who see “a justified Turkish response to Armenian and foreign provocations [and that] the picture *they* paint is very different from the one depicted by the Armenians and largely accepted in the West.” (p. 5) In this connection we note that the failure to mention co-victims of the Armenians further protects the spurious argument that Turkish killing was an understandable self-defense against the rebellious Armenians allying with Russia. The fact is that the Turks were out to kill many non-Turks and non-Muslims. See also a recent book by George Shirinian, well-respected director of the Zoryan Institute, on the fate of the Greeks.<sup>7</sup>

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7. *The Asia Minor Catastrophe and the Ottoman Greek Genocide: Essays on Asia Minor, Pontos, and*

How does our intrepid objective scholar conclude his book? Of course he wants to be helpful and help in curbing the denial that fuels “continuing fear and revenge.” (p. 137) So he offers strategies beginning with splitting the “more affluent Armenian diaspora” that is so concerned with “allegations of genocide” from “the nation in Armenia” and the “immediate economic reality of Armenia.” Yes, he wants to be large-hearted and he calls on Turkey to help Armenia with its economic problems, and thus in eternal realpolitik “Turkey may begin to split the two Armenian actors.” (p. 137) But all is not lost in deception. Goodhearted Gunter also includes a proposal to Turkey to open the borders it has lockjammed with Armenia for so many years.

As for the piece de résistance of “genocide allegations,” Gunter proposes that Turkey should continue to advocate a “joint commission of historians to undertake an objective analysis.” He notes again, in his fair way of course, that the Armenian diaspora opposes such a commission and therefore “once again Turkey is presented with an opportunity to portray the Armenian diaspora as obstructionist.” (p. 137) As noted earlier there is not a word on the very responsible objective commission that was hired years ago by TARC (Turkish Armenian Reconciliation Commission) in which the Turks were enthusiastic partners only to turn their backs on the results of the independent commission that said there was no basis for their denial - it was genocide!<sup>8</sup>

## Conclusion:

I have long been a student of the language and logic devices employed by deniers of *all* genocides. As noted, Michael Gunter has expanded the roster of denial strategies meaningfully and thereby qualifies for the high praise I have for his book.

This book should be studied by all students of denial for its artful stratagems of sounding fair, acting fairly, citing scholarship that covers divergent and contradictory points of view, speaking consistently softly, and of course calling for justice and peace, all in the course of organizing a disarming, deceitful, anti-history and anti-value-of-life work that should frighten anybody who is concerned with integrity in intellectual and scholarly works, and genuine valuing of human life.

Once upon a time deniers were so wild and obvious buffoons that they claimed in respect of the Armenian Genocide that the Ottoman Turkish government protected and took care of the poor Armenian exiles in their forced march out of Armenia – no mention of course of the many Armenians they killed outright. About the Holocaust, old-fashioned deniers said that there were no gas chambers, and that the poor Jews died from wartime conditions, even also happier nonsense that the inmates at Auschwitz dined to good music and swam in a swimming pool.

Now increasingly we have a whole series of recognized academicians who write in our contemporary language of scholarship and make their points in the name of open discussion and fairness. Michael Gunter can be congratulated that he has risen to the top of this group.<sup>9</sup> He is a bona fide academic who is one hell of an artful liar.

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*Eastern Thrace, 1912-1923*, edited by George N. Shirinian (Bloomington, IL: The Asia Minor and Pontos Hellenic Research Center, Inc., 2012).

8. Enver Ziya Karal, *Armenian Question (1878-1923)*, (Ankara: Gunduz, 1975), 18., International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) Report Prepared for TARC (February 10, 2003).

9. Deborah Lipstadt, *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory* (New York: Free Press, 1993).

## **Additional Writings on Denial by Israel W. Charny**

*Selected publications on denial of genocide by the author on how denials are created and the concepts and the languages that are used to get these crazy ideas across to rational people:*

Templates for Gross Denial of a Known Genocide: A Manual: "The Holocaust is the Hoax of the Twentieth Century." "There Never Was an Armenian Genocide." In *Encyclopedia of Genocide*. Edited by Israel W. Charny. (Santa Barbara CA: ABC-CLIO, 1999), 168.

Originally published in the *Internet on the Holocaust and Genocide*, 1986, Issue Seven, 3. Serious, real, but also inadvertently humorous as one sees the ridiculous shemas designed for denying an established genocide.

These templates were originally developed in a dialogue with Vartan Gregorian, then president of the New York Public Library, and were also based on joint research with Marjorie Housepian-Dobkin, a pioneer in writing about the Armenian Genocide as "the forgotten genocide.

"How to Avoid (Legally) Conviction for Crimes of Genocide: A One-Act Reading," In a special issue (Teaching about Genocide, edited by Samuel Totten) of the *Social Science Record*, 1987, 24 (2), 89-93.

A satire--at the legal offices as it were of "Satan, Whore, and Conformist, Attorneys-at-Law" who conduct a consulting firm catering to the likes of clients like Talaat, Hitler, Stalin, Idi Amin, and Pol Pot.

Israel W. Charny and Daphna Fromer, "A Follow-up of the Sixty-nine Scholars Who Signed an Advertisement Questioning the Armenian genocide," *Internet on the Holocaust and Genocide, Special Issue on the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide*, special double issue, no. 25/26 (April 1990), 5-6

Reprinted in *Journal of the Armenian Assembly of America*, 1990, 17 (1), 5. A fuller report of this research was published in an academic journal:

Israel W. Charny and Daphna Fromer, "Denying the Armenian Genocide: Patterns of thinking as defence mechanisms," *Patterns of Prejudice*, 32(1), 1998, 39-49. A classic study that has been widely referred to over the years in which, after promising the 69 signators absolute confidentiality, a surprising number acknowledged the mass murders of the Armenians, although most would not call the event "genocide."

"L'intolérable perversion des universitaires négateurs du génocide arménien ou de l'Holocauste," *Revue du monde arménien moderne et contemporain*, 3, 1997, 123-141. (French).

See the English version of this paper: The unbearable corruption of academics who deny the Armenian Genocide or the Holocaust. *IDEA, A Journal of Social Issues*, 2001, 6 (1). <http://www.ideajournal.com/articles.php?id=27>

## Background:

Censored by the Publisher

The above paper was accepted for publication in a book, *The Holocaust in an Age of Genocide*, by Palgrave (Macmillan UK), but was then canceled by the publisher in fear of suits by deniers of the Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide. The paper had been initially accepted and presented at a conference, *Remembering for the Future III*, Oxford, 2000. It was then chosen by the conference organizers to be included in an announcement of a selection of sample articles in a pre-publication brochure announcing the forthcoming book that was distributed internationally by the publishers.

The reason the paper was then removed peremptorily from the book was a legal opinion received from the publisher's attorney that this paper could draw libel suits from the academics discussed—including, and particularly, David Irving! This concern was expressed at the height of anticipations of the then forthcoming Irving-Lipstadt court case. No amount of effort to convince the publishers or the organizers of the conference to stand up to the risks and not succumb to the deniers were of avail.

This story was documented no less than by David Irving himself on his website (!) in a story posted June 27, 2001 which was reprinted from *The Armenian Reporter International*, December 30, 2000. As noted above the same paper already had been published in France, in French in 1997. The paper was now accepted for publication by the electronic journal, IDEA.

"Innocent denials of known genocides: A further contribution to a psychology of denial of genocide," *Human Rights Review*, 1 (3), 2000, 15-39.

The majority of deniers in this world are not "malevolent deniers," nor are they the exhibitionists or negativistic people who take pleasure in stirring up storms of provocation. They are rather 'innocents' who know too little about a genocide but who willingly choose to move towards and adopt the "other side" or point of view about a disputed genocide -- ultimately all genocides are disputed and denial is in fact aptly called "the last stage of genocide."

Why do they adopt this position? To what extent do they become advocates of denial? The paper presents two axes for classifying and understanding deniers. The first axis pertains to the extent of failure to acquire knowledge and the extent to which one subscribes to distortion of knowledge; and the second axis evaluates the extent to which a denier signals approval, encouragement and outright incitement of genocidal violence -- including unconscious wishes, to approve, encourage, and incite renewed violence.

"A Classification of Denials of the Holocaust and Other Genocides," *Journal of Genocide Research*, 5(1), 2003, 11-34.

This is a major paper providing a comprehensive -but always growing-classification of many different types and strategies of denials of established genocides

An updating of the above classification was published in GPN Web Magazine: A Classification of Denials of the Holocaust and Other Genocides - Updated 2012, <http://www.genocidepreventionnow.org/GPNSearchResults/tabid/64/ctl/DisplayArticle/mid/400/aid/655/Default.aspx>

“A Casebook of Denials of Doing Harm to Others and Rewards to People and Nations who Overcome Denial,” in Şafak Ural, Feridam Emecam, and Mustafa Aydın, (Editors), *The New Approaches to Turkish-Armenian Relations* (Turkish and English-language articles combined), (Istanbul: Istanbul University Press, 2008), 728-775.

Republished in *GPN Web Magazine, Issue 3 (2010). A Casebook of Denials of Doing Harm to Others and Rewards to People and Nations Who Overcome Denial* <http://www.genocidepreventionnow.org/Home/GPNISSUES/Issue3Summer2010/tabid/70/ctl/DisplayArticle/mid/460/aid/285/Default.aspx>

This paper was presented to a conference in Istanbul (!!) amidst a sea of atrocious denials by the overwhelming majority of presenters- - e.g., Morgenthau was a forgery, the court record of the Turkish court martial of the perpetrators was also a forgery. There were 5 of us who were invited scholars from outside of Turkey and who, known to the organizers, clearly validated the facts of the Armenian Genocide. The resulting book is a very unusual, almost comic collection of many denialist papers and our papers which clearly testify to the historical reality of the Armenian Genocide. It is amazing that the conference organizers published our pieces; moreover, my paper included a disclaimer that I insisted must introduce the paper, criticizing the overall predominant denial.

## BOOK REVIEWS

Wolfgang Gust, ed., *The Armenian Genocide: Evidence from the German Foreign Office Archives, 1915-1916* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2014), 816 pages,

Reviewed by Suren Manukyan, Deputy Director, Armenian Genocide Museum & Institute, Yerevan, Armenia

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The Armenian Genocide scholarship is ongoing struggle against denialism. The Turkish state denial policy became more sophisticated and aggressive politically. But academic level is also still in the spotlight of revisionist scholars.

One of the main arguments propounded by the professional denialists of the Armenian Genocide is the lack of sources credibility. For example “Blue Book” (The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915–1916) by James Bryce and Arnold J. Toynbee is attempted to call product of wartime propaganda<sup>1</sup> as well as the authenticity and veracity of the ambassador’s witness memoirs of Henry Morgenthau (1856–1945), the American ambassador to the Sublime Porte<sup>2</sup> is undermined by pointing him as “confirmed ‘Turcophobe’ whose hatred for the Turks was matched only by his unabashed support for the Christian minorities under Ottoman rule.”<sup>3</sup>

But one sort of sources is out of these allegations. They cannot identified as incredible, propagandistic of non-objective.

These sources are German documents. Germany was ally of Ottoman Empire in the WWI and had great and in many cases critical and decisive impact on policy making and implementation of Constantinople. More than 7-8 thousands German officers, 12 thousands soldiers served in Ottoman Empire during the WWI. Ottoman army was mostly administrated by German military stuff. Moreover, important decisions were made directly by German officers. Thus one of the Turkish generals Ismet pasha even complained that the German military mission was allowed to follow what was going on in the country and Germans were entrusted with all state secrets, both political and military. In particular, German officer was heading the Second Department Ottoman Army General Staff (or investigation department).<sup>4</sup> This shows the huge degree and level of information access the German soldiers and, therefore, the diplomats had.

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1. On Blue Book case see, Taner Akcam, *Anatomy of Genocide Denial: Academics, Politicians, and the “Re-Making” of History*, [www.chgs.umn.edu/histories/occasional/akcam\\_anatomy\\_of\\_denial.pdf](http://www.chgs.umn.edu/histories/occasional/akcam_anatomy_of_denial.pdf)

2. *A Question of Genocide: Armenians and Turks at the End of the Ottoman Empire* ed.by Ronald Grigor Suny, Fatma Müge Göçek, and Norman M. Naimark Suny (Oxford University Press, 2011), 15, see also, Vahakn N. Dadrian, *The key elements in the Turkish denial of the Armenian genocide: a case study of distortion and falsification* (Zoryan Institute, Toronto, 1999), 40-42.

3. Heath W. Lowry, *American Observers in Anatolia CA. 1920: The Bristol Papers*

4. V.N. Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide. Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus*, (Providence-Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1995), 252



German diplomatic network in the Ottoman Empire was very spread: Even after outburst of war they continued their stay in Turkey and their reports, notes and letters designed the pervasive canvas of planned and state-implemented policy of total annihilation.

For example, from the report of Ambassador in Constantinople (Wangenheim) to the Imperial Chancellor (Bethmann Hollweg) at 7 July 1915 “The expulsion and relocation of the Armenian people was limited until 14 days ago to the provinces nearest to the eastern theatre of war and to certain areas in the province of Adana; since then the Porte has resolved to extend these measures also to the provinces of Trebizond, Mamuret-ul-Aziz and Sivas and has begun with these measures even though these parts of the country are not threatened by any enemy invasion for the time being. **This situation, and the way in which the relocation is being carried out shows that the government is indeed pursuing its purpose of eradicating the Armenian race from the Turkish Empire...**” (p. 230)

The reports of German diplomats embraced the entire territory of the Ottoman Empire, where consuls and vice-consuls were informing the ambassadors and foreign ministers of their countries about the deportations and massacres of the Armenians by “strictly confidential” or “top-secret” inscriptions. These documents considered the deportation and massacres of the Armenian population as equivalent occurrences as a method of Armenians’ extermination. From the report of Rossler, Consul in Aleppo to Wolff-Metternich, the Ambassador in Constantinople when he shared disruption of Imperial Vice-Consul Hoffmann from Alexandretta “It can be regarded as an established fact that in the actual Armenian Vilayets – quite apart from the war zone near Van – the deportation has been accompanied by the massacre of the adult male Armenians, but also partly of the whole population of Armenian towns and villages.” (p. 505)

The German documents do not evoke any doubt, because the officers’ reports of war ally of Ottoman Empire of course could not be in favor of the Armenians. Moreover, there is also another feature, which makes the German sources trustworthy. The authors of these reports did not have any positive opinion about the Armenian population in the Ottoman Empire, and sometimes negatively tempered towards them. Thus, in 1915 ambassador Wangenheim transmits to Berlin that the situation of the Armenians is quite hopeless, and it is for Germany’s supreme interest not to interfere, and at the same time announces to Morgenthau that the Armenians were simply traitorous vermin.<sup>5</sup>

Representatives of the German diplomatic staff working many years in the Ottoman Empire were in close contact with the Armenian people, they were well aware of the situation, and the involvement of the Armenians in the economic life of the Empire, therefore they easily denied the Turkish hypotheses about the Armenians’ rebellion (“There only seems to be agreement on one point: that the Armenians have given up their ideas of a revolution since the introduction of the Constitution and there is no organization for such a revolt” by the Ambassador in Constantinople (Wangenheim) to the Imperial Chancellor (Bethmann Hollweg) (p. 169), they also reveal the real purpose of deportation (“...At this stage I will disregard the fact that these measures by the government were carried out in such a way that they meant the absolute extermination of the Armenians. Also, I do not believe that it is possible in any other way to destroy a culture that is older and much higher than of the

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5. H. Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* (NY: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1918), 370

Turks” in Memorandum concerning the Armenian question from Administrator in Erzerum to the Imperial Chancellor Bethman Hollweg) (p. 295) and the economic disaster which will cause the Empire in case of the Armenians destruction.

Although the German diplomats and consuls were sending countless messages to Berlin with details about the massacres, however they received clear command from the authorities: “not to interfere and keep the confidentiality”. (From the note of Imperial Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg to the Telegram of Ambassador in Constantinople Wolff-Meternich “The proposed public reprimand of an ally in the course of a war would be an act which is unprecedented in history. Our only aim is keep Turkey on our side until the end of the war, no matter whether as a result Armenians do perish or not...” (p. 492)

This corpus of 240 documents uncovers so large visions and horizons, that questions raised by their compiler and editor Wolfgang Gust sounds very natural: Was Imperial Germany a driving force in the Genocide of the Armenians, or possibly even the source of the ideas, as some non-German historians have suspected? Did Imperial Germany view the Armenian Genocide with indifference or with sympathy? Did some Germans or part of the leading class resist the deportations and mass killings? And finally, did Germany have the power to stop the Armenian Genocide, and if they were able to so, why did they not make use of this power? (pp. IX-X)

All of these questions are discussed in this volume, and furthermore discussed directly by the language of documents. German officials narrated this reports without any compassion and preconditions about nameless brutalities perpetrated in the ally state and by their allies and whose even that time called Extermination of whole nation. Wartime conditions were increasing the degree of already high leveled diplomatic secrecy. Therefore the German diplomats being sure of their reports’ secrecy did not constrain in any way while composing the contents of their letters.

This condition makes the book so attractive, exciting and important. Very important as Dadrian mentioned “The network of German diplomatic and military officials deployed throughout Turkey afforded them to rare opportunity to observe first-hand the atrocities in progress.” (p. XV)

The book includes an interesting foreword by the one the coryphaeus of Armenian genocide scholarship Vahakn Dadrian. Professor Dadrian being well informed in the topic as an author of noted German Responsibility in the Armenian Genocide: A Review of Historical Evidence of German Complicity, was published in 1996 gives analysis of critical import of official German documentation, historical legacy of German attitude to Armenian question and finally complicity, of German government in the Armenian Genocide. (pp. XIV-XXVIII)

The volume has also 130-pages overview strong written and covered the topic of Armenian Genocide in general as well as analyze meticulously different aspects reflected in the documents by group them into chapters (e.g. Deportation and Annihilation Campaigns with subchapters Labour Battalions, The Murder of Adult Males, Acts of Extermination in Home Towns, The Annihilation of Entire Deportation Convoys etc.). In one of the Chapters Gust dives into the details of the Role of Germans and their Joint Responsibility for the Genocide (pp 82-126) by describing the reactions of German Politicians and the Attitude of the German Ambassadors and the Consuls as well as Central Headquarters in Berlin.

To conclude, we should stress that the book “Armenian genocide, Evidence from the German Foreign Office Archives, 1915-1916” provides a unique, disturbing and close-up view of how German diplomats faced, reacted and accounted the violent annihilation of entire nation.

This fascinating, and highly informative book is one of the cornerstones of Genocide studies and its English translation was must for a scholar who researches any aspect of Armenian genocide. For that reason, alone, this book is highly recommended to those who are serious about attempting to begin to understand the history of Armenian Genocide.

At the foreword V. Dadrian evaluates German Documentation by the four attributes: reliability, explicitness, incontestability and verifiability (p. XV) and work of the author. “The corpus is the product of hard labour, diligence, discipline and, above all, tenacious persistence. Historical scholarship owes to Wolfgang Gust and his spouse Sigrid a great dept of gratitude”.

I surely should join to an appreciation.



## **I. Submission Guidelines**

- Articles submitted to International Journal of Armenian Genocide Studies for consideration should be related to genocide studies.
- Articles should be original contributions.
- Written in English and must correspond precisely to the format and style of articles published in International Journal of Armenian Genocide Studies.
- Manuscripts should be submitted electronically (via e-mail) to journal@genocide-museum.am
- There is no standard length for articles but 6,000-7,000 words (including notes and references) is a useful target.
- Photographs must be good quality and in black-white color.
- Authors should include a short biographical data as well as information concerning his/her relevant interests.
- TO BE ACCEPTED FOR PUBLICATION, ALL ARTICLES MUST PASS A PEER REVIEW BY AT LEAST TWO EXPERTS IN THE FIELD
- The Editor has the right to edit the article to conform to the editorial policy and specifications of International Journal of Armenian Genocide Studies and to reject the article if it not be acceptable to our editorial committee for publication.
- Book reviews and press-reviews should be kept to 2000-4000 words.

## **II. Language, Spelling and Grammar**

- Numbers from one to ten should be spelled out; other numbers should be written as numerals.
- Dates should be in the following form: December 21, 1915; 1894-96; the 1900s.
- Acronyms may be transliterated or translated in English.
- If an abbreviation is introduced into the article, the first time it is used, the abbreviation must be in parentheses following the full name or title [e.g. Committee of Union and Progress (CUP)].
- Any foreign word not known by the general public should be italicized, such as eghern or vilayet.
- All endnote sources using non-Latin alphabet should be transliterated and provided with English translation.

### **III. Article Format**

- Title must be all caps and centered
- All articles should be in Times New Roman 12 point font (including title and endnotes), double-spaced throughout.
- Long quotations (more than four lines) should be brought in the text in a separate passage, 10 point font without the use of quotation marks.

### **IV. Footnotes**

- The footnotes should be used numbered consecutively throughout the article, using a numeral (but not a roman numeral).
- All book and journal titles are italicized.
- For example: Vahakn Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide. Ethnic Conflict from Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus* (Providence and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1995), 18
- Rubina Perroomian, “The truth of the Armenian genocide in Edgar Hilsenrath’s fiction”, *Journal of Genocide Research* 5:2 (2003): 281-292

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